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CRITICAL, POETICAL,  
AND  
DRAMATIC WORKS.

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BY JOHN PENN, ESQ.

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VOL. II.

LONDON:

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1798.

CRITICAL, POETICAL,

AND

DRAMATIC WORKS

BY JOHN FENN, ESQ.

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## ART OF ENGLISH POETRY:

BEING AN

IMITATION, WITH NOTES,

OF

HORACE'S EPISTLE TO THE PISOS.

BY

JOHN PENN, Esq.

Τον φθόνον ὡς Πολλῶν ποδὶ τ' ἤλασεν, ὡδὲ τ' ἐέλπεν·  
 Ἀσσυρίῃ ποταμοῖο μεγάς ῥοῆς, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ  
 Λυμαίᾳ γῆς καὶ πολλῶν ἐφ' ὕδασι συρφεῖον εἴκει.  
 Διοῖ δ' ἐκ ἀπο πανίῃ ὕδωρ φορεῖσι Μελίσσαι,  
 Ἀλλ' ἥλις καθαρή τε καὶ ἀκρανίῃ ἀνερχεῖ  
 Πίδακ' ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγῃ λίθας, ἀκρον αἶον.

CALLIMACHUS, HYMN. AD APOLL.

Fierce with his foot indignant Phœbus spurn'd  
 The invidious monster, and in wrath return'd ;  
 " Wide rolls Euphrates' wave, but soil'd with mud,  
 " And dust and slime pollute the swelling flood :  
 " For Ceres still the fair Melissæ bring  
 " The purest water from the smallest spring,  
 " That, softly murmuring, creeps along the plain,  
 " And falls with gentle cadence, to the main."

TYTLER.



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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND  
RICHARD HURD,  
LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

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MY LORD,

As the nature of a work illustrative of the same poem as many of those criticisms by which you have conferred a benefit on English literature, points you out particularly as the person to whom I should properly show respect by the Dedication of it ; I am induced to act upon a presumption, that your objections to it may not be insuperable. Had I wanted this excuse, I should have been differently influenced by the knowledge I had, in common with the rest of the world, that your usual studies and occupations had ceased to be congenial with it ; and that, besides, this is the result of those pious and

conscientious motives of conduct, which ought, beyond all others, to be held sacred.

I will not, therefore, launch into a comparison of your successful literary labours with those of the great writers of antiquity ; nor enlarge upon the fact, that as the elegant Fenelon, of rank similar to yours, trod once with credit to himself and his country, in the steps of Homer, you are as worthily eminent among the active part of society, by pursuing the path in which you were preceded by Aristotle.

I would, my Lord, by no means lay an inferior stress on merits, which you consider of so much greater consequence. An ancestor of mine affirms, in a letter, which is printed, to Archbishop Tillotson, that “ it was an opinion of his moderation, simplicity, and integrity, rather than his parts or post, that always made him set a value upon his friendship, of which, perhaps, he was a better judge, leaving the latter to men



of deeper talents." I shall express a similar sentiment, in saying, that my prepossession in favour of your former pursuits does not prevent my chiefly admiring in you, those virtues, and that truly useful part of character, which, as they are beyond any thing, becoming in every station, so are they particularly suited to the important one you hold.

The venerable body to which you belong may be considered in the light, either of a band of censors, whose existence as a separate order in the state, is honourable to the constitution, by shewing its marked respect for morality; or of a collection of persons interested to represent the *virtue*, as others represent the *property* of the country, in parliament; or lastly, and principally, of public monitors, piously provided to direct the wandering thoughts of men to the mysterious Cause of all. An institution that can at once seem valuable on moral, political,

and religious accounts, must truly need every effort directed to the preservation of its original and natural advantages.

That there is no one more formed than your Lordship to adorn and to uphold it, by his qualities and character, is the sincere opinion of,

My LORD,

with high esteem,

your most obedient

humble Servant,

Spring Gardens,

Feb. 28, 1798.

JOHN PENN.

## PREFACE.

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THERE is this advantage in the imitation of a moral or critical poem over an original work of the same sort, that the reader is enabled, at a single glance, to perceive exactly how far any rule of right conduct or good composition is universal, and fitted for ages and countries widely removed from one another; while to the lover of the ancients, it may consecrate, as classical, the manners or literature of modern ones. It is, besides, of the nature, and has in a great degree the force of quotation; its positions constantly resting upon some respectable authority, and deriving from it additional use and consequence. To give it due effect, especially when the brilliant colouring, and fine random touches of a great poet are wanting, it is necessary to adhere very closely to those laws proper to it, which are dictated by plain common sense, and prior observation. One of the principal of them has been suggested lately by Mr. Boscawen, who, in a criticism upon Pope's imitation of the second epistle and second book of Horace, finds fault with one passage as being "strained, and unlike an original



“composition.” The contrary quality is perhaps the most obvious requisite in such a work. Another desirable thing would be, that external and real, as well as internal, and apparent evidence of originality, should be found in a competent number of allusions throughout the poem, which should be exactly, or nearly equal to, the just opportunities afforded of calling them forth. That the number, therefore, may be found, I have used numbers in referring, instead of letters, and should always in future recommend this mode. When there are so few parallelisms that the author’s principal employment is translation, he ought to be considered only as a translator ; and when most of the allusions are not parallelisms, he ought to be considered as a plagiarist, borrowing the general design of his work, and imposing on another the trouble of laying a train for his fancy. In both cases, he sets about his undertaking with an erroneous idea of its nature. On the other hand, a seeming deviation from the exact parallel, sometimes by tracing fanciful instead of real resemblances, may be artificial enough to please, and indeed often be of such advantage, as to increase greatly the interest of the work. This opens a new field to the poet. In the

translated parts, too, he does not seem obliged to the same verbal exactness as a translator.

It has been held by some, as it would appear, that excessive perspicuity is the first quality in a didactic poem; and that both the moderns and ancients have erred, when they have not explained to those who cultivate the most common art their verses celebrated, the particulars of their daily employment. Though I do not allow obscurity, even in an ode, to be a beauty, yet I have not the same idea as they of this *oracular* style of writing. Without wishing any diminution of its perspicuity, I cannot help thinking *certainly* is its greatest merit; since there ought to be little doubt of the propriety of rules which it lays down so formally, and with so much pomp and circumstance. In short, the business of the didactic poet is, as it were, TO WRITE IN LETTERS OF GOLD THE MOST UNIVERSAL AND PRECIOUS RULES OF ANY ART OR SCIENCE. They are by these means recommended to admiration, and imprinted in the memory. Another requisite need hardly be mentioned, as it is common to every sort of poetry, which is, that the subject should always be poetical. When a sub-

ject carries the writer among disagreeable images, it is not to be commended or justified, unless it detain him during a longer time among those which are proportionably interesting and amusing.

How far I have successfully laboured to exemplify the plan of didactic writing I have described, the public is to determine. Both a closer attention to the work, and an improvement of the subject since the time of Oldham, has enabled me to match every ancient with a modern allusion. At that time Chaucer, Spencer, Shakspeare, and Jonson, were the only "classics good in law." Milton was cotemporary with Oldham, and the greater part of those writers who have done honour to English literature, have flourished since his death. Hardly any name of literary consequence has been omitted, and indeed the original poem allowed me to be more select in the introduction of names than Pope was in his imitation of the epistle to Augustus. I have attempted to preserve the comprehensive character of it, expressed by a title it has received, in my imitation; and to make this, as far as possible (for it is not quite, strictly speaking, so, without the notes), an Art of English Poetry.



Boileau's work is more methodical, and more equally and regularly attentive to every species of composition ; a complete art of poetry being avowedly his intention. Yet there is less of certainty in several of his rules ; and this will strike us more, if we consider a passage imitated from him by Sir William Soame in Dryden's works, which is as follows, in treating of epic poetry :

In vain have our mistaken authors tried  
To lay these ancient ornaments aside—  
To fright poor readers in each line with hell,  
And talk of Satan, Ashtaroth, and Bel——

——to reject

The gods, and heathen ornaments neglect ;  
To banish Tritons who the seas invade ;  
To take Pan's whistle, or the Fates degrade ;  
To hinder Charon in his leaky boat  
To pass the shepherd with the man of note ;  
Is with vain scruples to distract your mind.

This was published in the year 1683, and therefore here is an argument *against* poetical probability resting on the supposed failure of Milton in his attempt at excellence in *Paradise Lost*.

In tragedy, likewise, Horace has much better provided against the possible eligibility of domestic stories. Thus on the two noblest sorts of poetry he has written more unexceptionably for all ages and nations; and full as much, though an ancient, in some others; so that I believe I have completed my work without being driven to any strained parallelism. Hume has, in his *Essays*, an observation, that in general rules all persons agree; but that the moment they begin to be explained with regard to their proper application, people find themselves differing from each other as much as they were before unanimous. I have long thought I saw an instance of this in the *Art Poétique*, the first canto of which confines itself to general rules, and therefore nobody has any thing to object to it. But in the subsequent ones appear those doubtful precepts of which I have been speaking, and the propriety of which, as well as of all similar ones, would easily be brought to the test by a trial of their fitness for imitation. When a didactic poet descends into particulars, he ought to be very careful that education, party, fashion, or something else, does not mislead his judgment. Boileau,

however, has treated some parts of his subject in so much fuller, more elaborate, and more satisfactory a manner than Horace, as to become a sort of rival of him. \* I am happy that in Boileau, is to be found a Christian who echoes Horace's recommendation to poets, to pursue their studies with ardour and disinterestedness; and who, by voluntarily proposing fame, like him, as their reward, justifies me in doing so, when obliged by the laws of composition. He lived during one of those celebrated periods in which the human understanding makes extraordinary efforts of various kinds, which the historian delights to dwell upon, and which the philosopher pleases himself with contemplating. In some of these the arts and sciences resemble rays emanating from a single body, as they add to the glory of some particular court or country where they have been encouraged. In the age of Louis the Fourteenth they flourished equally out of the dominions of their royal patron; and the greatest genius that the

\* Those readers, who do not want to see the exertions of genius defended as moral, need not read the remainder of the Preface.



world ever saw was born in England.\* It has always been the inclination of mankind at large to favour the innocent exercise of talents from which they were to derive benefit, either by the enlarge-

\* The age of Alexander has a strong resemblance to that of Louis. In both, the theatre, which unites so many arts appeared to be the centre of the system ; and it has been well described by Voltaire with an amiable enthusiasm, worthy of a more perfect character. He is speaking of a fine scholar.

“ He knew Athens better than, at this time, many travelers know Rome after having seen it. That prodigious number of statues of the greatest masters, those columns which adorned the market-places, those monuments of genius and greatness, that superb and immense theatre, built in a vast square between the town and the citadel, where the works of a Sophocles and an Euripides, were attended to by a Pericles and a Socrates, and where young people could not look on standing, or tumultuously ; in a word, all that the Athenians had done of all kinds, for the arts, was present to his mind. He was far from thinking, like those men, so ridiculously austere, and those bad politicians, who still blame the Athenians for having been too sumptuous in their public games, and who do not know that very magnificence enriched Athens, in attracting to it a crowd of strangers, who came to admire her, and receive lessons of virtue and of eloquence.”

*Epitre à la Duchesse de Maine, prefixed to Oreste.*

ment of human knowledge, or by furnishing means to that pliability of the mind, which Sterne takes notice of, to blunt the edge of misfortune, as well as by increasing those harmless gratifications which animate us in the discharge of duty. It is only when a sect prevails which entertains opinions as gloomy as the Presbyterians of Charles the First's time, or when there exists an ardent zeal for proselytism, a self-opinion, and a love of novelty, that danger can be apprehended of a people's acting so contrary to nature, as at their own loss to torture and tantalize any individual among them, by forbidding the free exercise of his faculties, which, less even from a desire of common esteem, than of congenial enjoyment, might otherwise be directed by his native bent. How absurd, indeed, would be such conduct! We may imagine a modern innovator, using power which is in his hands, who has a partial idea of what is doing good to mankind. Suppose one then to allow nothing to be useful but what increased the value and quantity of the property of his fellow-creatures, whether rich or poor, while aiming at the popular, and certainly praise-worthy character which might naturally

ensue to him from part of his consequent exertions. Suppose likewise from this cause, and his being a leveller of character, he placed men by his interest in public offices, with the sole view either of benefiting the community according to his own notions, or of enriching the families of his friends. By his ill management, therefore, in disregarding times and opportunities, the man of business might find himself commanding a company, the military genius might become a justice of peace, the studious solitary man might be bewildered with noise and importunity in some troublesome employment; and the man educated for that employment be made historiographer. Let us imagine a point of time when they are all called upon to act.—

Quî statis? Nolint.

The perplexity would now begin. The first would let pass the moment that must have insured a victory to his country; the second would be unable to do justice to an aggrieved person in a prompt and satisfactory manner; the third would be so little collected as to retard the business of his office; and the last be hunting in vain for records,



which, if found, he could not avail himself of to great effect. These persons would possibly be very ill qualified for any thing but what their principal talent fitted them for; and therefore might make a figure in society which could not be flattering to themselves, and in order to be *useful*, become *useless*, to others. This must be the consequence of an odious distinction between different inoffensive studies, and of an idea that praise ought to be profusely bestowed on those who are *said* to be employed in *doing good*, and withheld from those who follow the bent of a dissimilar mind. But we shall profit as little by favour and discouragement in this case, as in commercial matters. It is better to leave nature, as far as possible, to herself; since I believe none will doubt, that as on the one hand, a person who cultivates a liberal art ought to be actuated principally by the love of it: so, on the other, one who would be serviceable to his fellow-creatures, ought at least to be somewhat influenced by *pure* Christian benevolence; praise not being to be thought of till the moment it is earned, though it then shews marked contempt in a society to refuse it to any of its members. If

the natural taste of the former can render him satisfied with the mere pleasure resulting from his employment, surely the professed piety of the other ought to operate independently of still more earthly motives ; nor ought he to think his work imperfect unless his actions are noised abroad, and he perpetually hailed as the benefactor of the human race. Their pursuits, however, are both deserving of praise sought temperately, and without envy and censoriousness: for surely there is another merit, the greatest of all, yet behind. As late as towards the middle of the present century, another character was allowed to be not only good, but the “ noblest work of God.” It would not be wonderful, however, in this age of wild, fantastic theory, that a character should be under-rated which confined itself to doing so much good as it was certain would be unattended with equal harm ; which avoided any notice or observation on account of what it did ; and the money and occasional services of which were left to be commanded by those whose time were easily and naturally employed in discovering objects of charitable compassion. But much expectation of praise for specific moral actions, is

productive of those crude undigested plans of improvement which throw society into confusion. A silent preference of the *leniores virtutes*, the milder virtues of Cicero, would perhaps be the better way; for the quality of common honesty, though appearing slow and inefficient, may finally be found to outstrip presumptuous and pretending virtue, in the same manner as the tortoise overtook the hare. If we compare all the bad consequences which have resulted to the world from what are only allowed elegant, and what are proudly termed useful, pursuits, we may find that among the former are perhaps the disgust experienced by the perusal of bad poetry, the opportunities lost of advancement, by an unconquerable propensity to the belles lettres; or, at worst, the ruin of an individual, brought upon him by a taste for building or gardening: but among the latter, are all the malignant passions that generate, and are generated by, dissensions in a state; all the irremediable wrongs, and the undistinguishing and prolonged carnage that curse mankind during the prevalence of anarchy; and lastly, whatever mischief is occasioned by the weak or wicked politician, to the dis-



grace of more settled times. It was with a view of being usefully instrumental in making changes in human affairs, that many principal actors in the French revolution were led first to broach systems of government, then to encourage, and soon perhaps commit, excesses, in order to establish them. Among those too of inferior consequence, we may conceive many a staid old woman, of acknowledged repute for the observance of what is meet and right, but with a disposition to find fault, and regulate the actions of others by her own mode of thinking, to have first joined in the outcry against Aristocracy, and only naturally bestirred herself, glorying in the new career opened to her sex ;

*Audax, et cœtus potuit quæ ferre virorum.*

Afterwards, as her secret love both of power, and the exclusive fame for virtue operated, she may have neglected that candour and fairness which gives every sectary his due ; and vilified characters and dispositions with as little allowance for their infinite variety in the world, as regard to the dictates of natural equity. At last, perhaps, she may have made up her mind to the violent measures of

the ruling party, and her envy and vanity increasing with her means of gratifying them, if she did not join the Poissardes during the perpetration of horrid crimes, she may have silently triumphed at the idea of the possessors of some excellencies she had not, palpitating at their feet. But why should she have wished to monopolize excellence? she had that portion of agreeable qualities by which Providence designed she should adorn society; and as long as she either did not form or communicate dangerous plans of imaginary utility, she enjoyed the greatest of all praise, that which is the easiest attained by the weak, and yet the most honourable to the ingenious; I mean a conduct deservedly blameless. But it might not be amiss for even men to guard against the approach of these *anile* passions, which would mistakingly be supposed peculiar to the fair sex. It is possible for them equally to conceal from themselves by enthusiasm, a love of censure, and a desire of ingrossing the homage of the world; and by the help of established popularity to bear down all opposition to their opinions. But reason and common sense will speak loudly in favour of the rights of nature, and very many

will always allow, that whoever disapproves of a transgression, by thought, word, or deed, of the real laws of Christian morality, need not scruple to exert his talents for the honour of his country, by the gratification of his countrymen. Indeed, I believe, at the present moment, few would see in any but a ridiculous light the *unamiable naiveté* of a person's confessing envy, and a desire, because he feels pain unreasonably, that another should be deprived of perhaps his only possible enjoyment, and the public of advantages connected with it. But it is no matter either of ridicule or common pleasantry, that the daggers of the envious, so ready to leap out of their bosoms during a popular commotion, should prematurely point at the active and industrious, owing to the encouragement given their injustice by the countenance of persons of fortunate fame, whose approbation sanctifies their ungenerous and pernicious passions. The ease of making a party to oppress and render odious any one who, by following some less general pursuit, is in a sort of insulated situation, where, what he immediately suffers, is not in common with the rest of the society, well deserves consi-



deration. The opinions circulated by him who undertakes it, with however good an intention, ought to be watched in their effects; as a heated imagination is but ill fitted to regulate the affairs of men. But this evil is of more general concern than it may seem. As good judges of the efforts of the mind are but rare, no person can be safe in his incapacity, and therefore every body must have reason to dread, and complain of it. Is it not inconsistent likewise, to approve of envy, and censure emulation, so near allied to it, when the chief circumstance in which they differ is this, that the nature of envy is to check improvement, and of emulation, to promote it? A farther difference may, it is true, be seen in envy alone carrying this spirit into malevolence. That love of fame which produces emulation, has been sometimes excused as

The last infirmity of noble mind.

And, surely, in youth we might rather be inclined to extol the man who is free from it, than condemn him whom it actuates. But if persons now living are to guard against the passions that prompt only to excel, what shall we say of those

dead authors who have not scrupled to exert themselves at their instigation, and that so much and so successfully, as to raise them far above both their cotemporaries and followers? surely they lie buried in some cross-road, and their names are delivered down as infamous to posterity; the historian ranks them with Borgia and Cataline; and we only read and understand them to know the dangerous examples we are to avoid! The contrary, however, is so much the case, that though statues and monuments have been erected to them in our principal churches, not even the most unpopular minister has been blamed either from permitting them to be so, or not removing them when they were. Yet they ought certainly to be removed, before the writers of these degenerate days can be thought deserving of envious censure.

It will undoubtedly be allowed, that had Julius Cæsar, by confining himself to his astronomical studies, anticipated the discoveries of Newton, he would not therefore have merited a fate, which was the just punishment of usurpation. Sometimes envy and selfishness operate unknown to their possessors, or at least are concealed from the world,

when some manner of life is not openly allowed of-  
fensive, from eclipsing talents, but being prejudicial  
to mankind. From the sentimental days of Plato  
down to those of Rousseau, almost every innocent  
pursuit or habit has found a sect or a philosopher  
adverse to it: and it is worthy of consideration,  
how far they have been free from influence. May  
not an interest in the glory of philosophy, or the  
appearance of singular poetical talents, such as  
Rousseau perceived in Voltaire, suggest a con-  
demnation of the arts and sciences? may not an  
affectation of sanctity, or love of power, in some  
Roman Catholic countries, have discountenanced  
the commerce of the sexes? may not also the same  
love of power, in priests, have obstructed the pro-  
gress of human knowledge? On the contrary, were  
Voltaire and Helvetius firmly convinced, though  
they seem to profess such a belief, that the Chris-  
tian religion was less capable than deism or atheism  
of producing an honest man? Were the illuminati  
all unexceptionably disinterested in planning the  
downfall of civil and religious establishments?  
How often has the rank, profession, or country of  
a man furnished absurd objections against him!

The gay have been thought naturally dissipated and unprincipled; and the grave dangerous, and fit for stratagems and treasons. Diderot and Rousseau fell out upon a difference of opinion with regard to the question, whether society or solitude was most suited to the nature of man: neither of them reflecting on the necessary variety of human character, nor discovering, by a comparison of both their dispositions, that the one was formed to be the orator of a *petit souper* at Paris, and the other to rove and meditate among the mountains of Switzerland.\*

• Wit and satire sometimes good-humouredly, and without knowing it, do this injustice; as they are naturally peering round them for objects at which to shoot their darts. “The Pursuits of Literature” has attacked some learned country neighbours of mine, and other gentlemen, for translating Gray’s Elegy into Greek! But after our laugh is over, wherein shall we discover the absurdity of this? It has been observed, that it is also the employment of a schoolboy, and therefore objectionable. But it denotes the greatest discouragement of taste and learning, to suppose them only instruments of education; and if these elegant employments are allowable to all, they are peculiarly suitable to



Different sorts of understandings, likewise, and studies, have divided men into parties. But when we make of our opinions unworthy fetters to load nature, can we wonder at her attempt to free herself, by bursting through the rational barriers of law and government, or at her condemnation of them, as the authority by which she suffers? it is, in fact, opinion, and not law, that tyrannizes over nature. It would be no difficult matter to obey a code of moral and political laws, that could have existed for ages, if the imagination were not always mischievously at work to render it grievous. But besides being debarred from following the bent of

those who have any connection with that long venerable place

Where grateful Science still adores

Her Henry's holy shade.

Mr. Arthur Young, in *Annals of Agriculture*, criticizes Horace's praise of sleep as a country enjoyment. It would be ludicrous gravely to speak in favour of drowsiness; yet what has been described more beautifully than sleep? The poet's imagination may require more indulgence; and let it be recollected, that the utmost watchfulness could not produce the abilities of Mr. Arthur Young.

our own dispositions, we are taught that it is improper to follow nature too, by allowing of the division of labour, and that the principle of *co-operation* is disgraceful to mankind. I cannot understand what possible advantage can accrue from this doctrine; the object of which appears to me, that by an abolition of the present system of society, we should resign all the chances it affords of farther improvement, and aim at unattainable happiness with still less reason to hope than we had before. For the gambler in philosophy and politics is of all others the most adventurous. The common gambler sees the treasure which is played for; but that for which the other makes such sacrifices, exists only in his imagination. But why is the labourer supposed degraded by that division of labour which assigns to him his employment, for the same end of general prosperity as all his countrymen have their tasks allotted to them? I can imagine him, with as good reason as any, rejoicing, while he is at work, at the advantages of this principle, and reflecting, that by his rank avoiding to meddle with politics, and many other pursuits, people of peculiar talents are enabled to give their whole

attention to the improvement of them, and unite with him in doing what is most for the honour of their common country. Though illiterate, he may be taught to understand the general merits of most of our great men, and would in conversation naturally repeat with the same enthusiasm the names of Newton and Shakspeare, as those of Duncan and St. Vincent. True philosophy too will deny that any such triumphs are less his concern than that of the richest of the community. If, however, in such a state of things, any person should, by a natural effort of the mind, prove himself equal to success in more than one pursuit, *for which his education prepares him*, one may allow indeed the general rule that

One science only will one genius fit.

But should both be ready, and rejoice to make an exception in favour of him, as of one whose comprehensive or universal genius does honour to mankind, the ornamental parts of his character would be beneficial, by throwing one collection of people, and still more by throwing several, into shade.

But there are two objections made to the spirit of true patriotism, which it is necessary to consider. First, many people have a fondness (not of a very Christian-like sort, whatever they may imagine) of imputing bad motives to the patriot, and suppose him to exert his zeal

In emulation opposite to Heaven.

These people repeat, as if it were an argument in the present case, what all Christians are taught by Scripture, namely, "that the kingdom is not of this world." I have been solicitous to know the opinion of the best and most learned divines respecting this phrase; and the result of any inquiry I have made is, that this construction put upon it is a wrong one. It has struck me that these moralists resemble the Chinese, who are discontented with God's works, and cramp the feet, in order to prevent their growing to the size and shape he had intended. It is no piety to stunt the growth of what the earth brings forth, that is either valued for use or beauty; and it is surely laudable to encourage, with the patriot, though he is blamed for it, the production of every sort and



degree of excellence, in order that he may find new occasion to praise the Deity for his glorious works. The affairs and interests of men are the immediate objects of religion ; and wherever they have been kept out of view, or, in other words, rational morality neglected, superstition has afflicted mankind with a greater or smaller number of its lamentable evils ; when massacre and torture have frequently shewn themselves its natural attendants. This impaired judgment too may have been much produced by the mind being kept in an unhealthy state, owing to a want of manly national habits, and its exercise in various ways ; among others, by elegant studies.

A second objection is, that by a particular attention to the interest of our country, we act contrary to the spirit of brotherly love, which prompts us to have equally a regard for the whole human race, and be what is termed *citizens of the world*. But why is this proneness to suspect hatred and enmity in our fellow-creatures ? Patriotism seems only a modification of, and is produced by, that very brotherly love which approves of it as the best mode of promoting the happiness of *every*

nation. In going to court at Versailles formerly from Paris, I recollect having thought with pleasure that I was travelling the same road that Boileau and Racine had done ; and though the arbitrary principles of a French court could not be alluring to an Englishman, my mind dwelt with pleasure on every thing that is recorded of their connection with Louis the Fourteenth. In order to feel enthusiasm at the idea of genius flourishing and being patronized in a rival country, no self-denial was necessary. And I appeal to any of my readers who has felt this sentiment, whether it does not rather arise from, than militate against, the principle of patriotism. In short, those who are the loudest to profess themselves citizens of the world, are not always the most so. They may compose nations who attempt inconsistently to destroy the balance of power in Europe ; or they may compose clubs, who meet in order to promote all the other horrors of cosmopolitism ; which will appear in Professor Robison's " proofs of conspiracy," just published. Let us cease, therefore, by ridicule or censure, equally unjust, to discourage our most deserving citizens ; those, namely, who

love their country, and are solicitous for its honour.

But from whence does all this injurious error arise? it is because people will not be content to theorize quietly, and for their own satisfaction, but must publish their opinions with an evident desire of interfering with the innocent pursuits of others. I cannot agree with an eminent literary character, that Hartley is a philosopher of a more useful kind even than the great Newton. I consider the latter differently from what Dr. Priestley appears to do, not only as a natural, but as an universal philosopher, whose splendid discoveries incidentally suggest a rule capable of guiding us in every action of our lives; and who, on that account, deserves the greatest part of his praise. If we were to gain a better knowledge of the nature and effect of every principle in morals and politics, before we acted from it (which is like what he advises in natural philosophy), there would not be those frequent revolutions in the world, in which, though men, we undertake the work of gods; nor would many other evils, hardly inferior, be our fate. I could wish Newton were esteemed the head of a sect of

moral philosophers, who at the end of every century should celebrate a jubilee in his honour. I would then have all the doctrines that had been taught during that century pass in review before them, and an inquiry made concerning each, whether it was *demonstrated*, or only *in a manner demonstrated*. If the latter, I would either have it recommended to oblivion, or a mark set upon it, in order to prevent such a reliance on its truth as to be a cause of animosity and dissension. For verisimilitude short of truth, is the greatest beauty in poetry, but is the most dangerous of all qualities in philosophy connected with morals, unless kept within due bounds. Newton's doctrine, therefore, may appear to resemble oil which that mild genius has thrown upon the raging sea of opinion, to divest of terror and danger its boiling waves, quicksands, and dreary confines,

Multorum ossibus albos.

Surely it is time to let the human mind repose after the maddening and destructive importunity of proselytism. It has been enough lacerated by attempts forcibly and inconsiderately to root out its



ancient prejudices, since the same blood and groans have ensued as issued in much less quantity from the single body of Polidorus. It would therefore be vastly better to approve or condemn, not in proportion as employments are supposed useful or ornamental, but as being either thus useful or ornamental, they are sure or doubtful of ultimate success, and ultimate innocence. For I myself consider the morning drives, tea, and cards (without scandal and gambling) of female frivolity, as much more worthy of a rational being, than all the senatorial exertions of brain-sickly, Frenchified, philosophy.

I would not be thought to reflect upon the system of Hartley, where he left it; especially as to ingenuity. It has been adopted by men of very great abilities; and perhaps, suitably to what I have heard of the opinions of Sir William Jones, his memoirs, which I understand are coming out, may prove him to be of their number. Even should he, however, be found too much attached to a theory, it will be in company with all the eminent philosophers down to Bacon; nor can it be construed into an injustice to his memory, to allow to him the praise of unrivalled comprehension, but

to pause in granting him likewise that of *universal* judgment.

There is one attachment to theory of a plausible and sensible kind ; and that is, when it is so much supported by practice as to appear to rest upon no other foundation. Agriculture, for instance, with its wants vouched by experiment, has the strongest claims upon us, and we ought to sacrifice almost every thing to it, but those laws which constitute the happiness of all the different orders in the community. Yet even that may become too pressing ; for though it is much, it is not all. The animated clay that forms the composition of man, must naturally appear of greater consequence than the clods which soil our shoes in walking out into the fields.

But it must be owned impossible to live without a certain portion of theory. Some principles must daily be taken for granted, of which we doubt the fitness ; and our actions therefore partake of the character of demonstrative certainty.

Few in the extreme, but all in the degree.

We all know that what is not demonstrated is often as true as what is ; for even that, unless self-evident, was once otherwise. However there

are bounds to this liberty of conduct ; when, for example, by our means a state might suffer from a spirit of faction, which threatens alterations in it. On the contrary, if changes that are not fundamental and violent are to be made in the system of government, they are much better left to those who are placed at the head of affairs, and therefore *obliged to act*. This may seem the best mode of altering a government, in the way proposed by Hume, in order to preserve it essentially the same. In other respects we may approve of a reverence for those ancient institutions which, with the worst impurities they have collected during a long course of time, are still able, as it were, to filter the heterogeneous influx of new opinions, and render ornamental and nutritive what would have otherwise been unsightly, and might have proved poisonous. To allow, too, necessity alone to justify insurrection, is less in the spirit of theory. It was the employment of Descartes and Leibnitz to plan and to imagine ; but it was the glory of Newton to strike out a contrary method, and *aspire* to be a *passive philosopher*.

However, Newton himself has shewn us that a man of solid judgment may be led safely into rea-

soning that does not turn out conclusive, when he foretold the early ruin of England from the national debt. But such arguments at that time might not only have been safe, but useful, towards the commencement of the funding system, to give warning to Ministers at a juncture when they might profit by it. In England greater scope is allowed the politician than in other monarchical countries; for a certain opposition to government is not more necessary from a spirit of liberty than of loyalty. The tribunes of Britain, or heads of our Opposition, are both in a constitutional and honourable situation, and ought not to sleep, or be silent in their post. The natural opposition in Continental monarchies, are science and commerce; and by their means those governments are continually growing more tolerable and rational when left to themselves. Science was operating so powerfully in France before the late revolution, that it must have meliorated the condition of its inhabitants, had not republican enthusiasm formed an opposite spring of action, which defeated its efforts. Though each of them should have proved beneficial, unimpeded by the other, yet both set at work together



might naturally exceed human abilities to direct them, and one grand attempt has failed to “mow our way” to perfection through millions of our fellow-creatures. It would be difficult to prove satisfactorily, that all the advantages which may ever attend that Revolution could not have been obtained without all the bloodshed and calamities it has occasioned, to afflict and to disgrace mankind. So much preferable may it appear, to trust the improvement of the human race to the most able and disinterested, than to rely for it on the clamorous discussion of abstract rights by all sorts of people : and, because true improvement is not perceptible enough to please us, deceive ourselves into an opinion of our being rapidly progressive by the same means that makes us quite as rapidly retrograde ! At least our statesmen ought to be ambitious by slower, but safer and more glorious endeavours, to enable, with their successors, the British constitution to slide securely upon a complete foundation of reason.

I have entered at large into the subject of encouragement due to merit and patriotism, because, though Horace of course dwells but a short time

upon these topics, I was desirous that there should exist at least one zealous and minute protest against every attempt to circumscribe mankind within narrower bounds than those of duty, and interrupt its progress to perfection. I do not think that there is any enlightened Christian that could object to a single argument I have used in favour of the principles I recommend. If any one finds, after self-examination, that he disapproves of them from motives purely conscientious, it remains to be considered, whether he has those discriminating powers, or, if I may so express it, that *genius for morality*, which entitles him to set bounds to the legal and approved actions of men, according to his own interpretation of the Scriptures; or whether his imagination does not carry him away after the example of modern philosophers, though in a different manner. For there is a connection between extremes; and atheistical and superstitious fanaticism are equally to be avoided. I shall therefore not scruple to confess a wish that every Englishman would contribute his powers in different ways to adorn the world by adorning his country; and that the orator, the historian, the philosopher, the political

economist, the collector, the artist, the man of the world, the philologist, the merchant, the farmer, and every other rank and description of men, would unite with the reverend moralist, who possesses liberality, and can esteem honour and sincerity, to improve human society to the utmost ; all favouring each other's views, and the cultivation of each other's talents. There has certainly never been a country that, like England, was blessed at once with unrivalled wealth, (which if it adds to the difficulty, adds likewise to the glory of government) with laurels, never eclipsed, in all parts of literature, and above all, with a system of free laws, not hastily established, to form the short lived boast of vanity, but which have lasted, and acquired stability for centuries. It is more pious to rejoice, than unthankfully to despond, in contemplating our advantages ; and it is praise-worthy to work upon the foundation already raised, to benefit and adorn human nature, as well as our own particular country. Mutual assistance for this end would be characteristic of the refinement of an enlightened age. Though a late excellent writer and orator has laid a great stress upon party distinctions, I could never

be persuaded by his remarks, nor even by those of Cicero, who, while he holds that friendship should originate from virtue, seems to think it can be weakened and terminated by something less than vice. It would indeed, at certain periods, be prudent to avoid the pain caused by an association of ideas from the presence of a friend whom we supposed engaged in dangerous public measures; a pain which would be felt on his account, as well as our own! But if a virtuous man should be insane, he may properly be kept separate from others during his fit, and yet not forfeit either their respect or regard. It is always to be hoped that, at his lucid intervals, he may concur with those of sound mind, in promoting the good of the community. No party man will allow that he acts from motives of insanity, and therefore ought *a fortiori*, to put his hand to the oar of society. If, by his means, and those of others, a general enthusiasm can be created in a country in favour of it, his endeavours will be patriotic in proportion as the government is old, and therefore more exposed to danger, from that love of novelty, which

Vires acquirit eundo.



I have mentioned the orator as one of those characters whose talents it would be desirable to see exerted ; but I think I hear an objection suggested by the English prejudice in favour of plain, useful, sense, as it is called, and a sneer at the extraordinary length of speeches. But let it be recollected, that the aim of eloquence is not to be tedious ; and if the glory of the English senate were sought, orators might curtail their speeches to become more impressive.

With respect to France, I think I have made English patriotism appear not improperly hostile to her. I shall, it is true, lament if a generous disposition to side rather with the weak than the strong, a fear of materially altering the well studied system of Europe, and other considerations, fail to make us view her in the light of a rival country, I wish her always both strong and weak enough to be so, as I think, were she destroyed, we might be in the situation of Rome after the destruction of Carthage. It is well known that that event has been supposed to have hastened her downfall, and that of liberty. Not only may we regret, that on that occasion the invention of arts was delayed

that might at an early period have cheered the deserts of Africa, and occasioned the improvement of mankind from that quarter : but the mistress of the world herself became too corrupt and debilitated to proceed in that great and necessary work ; and at last fell a victim to the barbarous rage of those who despised it. On these accounts, I think it will not appear fanciful or romantic to wish France and England to be ever exactly balanced, as being the most brilliant powers that exist. If either of them is more favoured *by the world at large* than the other, it may endanger that true equality and genuine republicanism, which are the cause both of king and people ; it may, in short, endanger the liberties of Europe. Here then is a *contrat social*, which may safely set all ranks of people philosophizing. However zealous Europeans have shewn themselves in supporting the balance of power, I appeal to the reader, whether any lover of strong government has objected, that the advantage of such a government is better enjoyed when there is one country over all, than when there exist rival countries. On the other hand, no republican, reasoning abstractedly, has

ever laid it down as a rule, that the submission of the whole world to a single nation would increase liberty. Now if Newtonian certainty can be attained, it is by the concurrence in opinion of those of the most opposite interests and ways of thinking. Besides, suppose the principle of *delenda est Carthago* were to be reprobated by every person in this country (I will not remark how much less that is the question in France, or ask whether it has not even been the public language there; but never hinted in England, to our comparative honour and exculpation in this war), would it not prepare the way to a mutual confidence, and be a harbinger of future peace between the countries? If, by such a conduct, we did not effect this, we should

Do more, we should deserve it.

I rather rejoice at our naval victories being balanced by the heroism of the French, if it is only because the sum total of manly spirit in the world is greater. Lately, it is true, I thought their heroism a just cause of uneasiness; but we do not at present, I believe, exalt them in imagination into *intelligential* beings,

—— the least of whom could wield  
These elements, and arm him with the force  
Of all their regions.

In such qualities as do not affect our independence, it is always desirable both to a man and a nation, that he should be excelled, if the world by that means, including himself, becomes a gainer. No jealousy ought, in the smallest degree, to be a check upon talents exerting themselves without injury or insult, but every encouragement is, on such occasions, due to rivals. If this rational conduct towards another nation is alleged to be contrary to the spirit of patriotism, I am not by any means ready to allow it. Patriotism and justice were never held to be incompatible; and if justice at any time should seem to call off our attention too much from our own interests, an equal portion of patriotism ought to be summoned to our aid to counterbalance it.

I do not know how my wish may be approved, that in speaking of England to the world, it may be said,

She reveres herself and thee.



But I think one thing will seem evident, namely, that there is one person who judged a crusade to have been intended of late years, rather by France than against her ; and that his party, therefore, may seem in the present contest to have been quite as fast friends of *liberty*, as their opponents were of *the constitution*.

At any rate, it will be desirable, that as, according to the poet last quoted,

Night, and all her sickly dews,  
Her spectres wan, and *birds of boding cry*,  
Are given to range the dreary sky,  
Till down the eastern cliffs afar  
Hyperion's march they spy, &c.

So fanaticism and despondency give way to the gradual operation of reason and reflection. If the wonderful penetration of any persons has discovered the Ministry to have been evidently wrong, it is extremely hard that they will not condescend to make known the proofs of it to those of ordinary acuteness ; since I, for one, will immediately consent to alter my conduct ; nor will many wait for

the example. Prophecies (besides those of *Brothers*) have been boasted of with regard to the issue of the present war ; but of what authority ? As to the question, whether, supposing it necessarily continued, the national debt would have increased somewhat in the proportion it has done, and its consequent inconveniences happen ;

There needs no ghost come from the grave  
To tell us this.

But if we are called upon to consider the melancholy and unnoticed forebodings of ill success in war, why, it may be asked, was not the prophetic strain extended to our fortunate exertions ? why did it omit to take account of those subsequent labours *on the sea*, which we shall very, very often *look back to with delight* ? and lastly, since all things are possible, why did it not, in representing us a devoted Troy, make allowance for, at least the possibility of our becoming a glorious Rome, likely to be renowned in arts and arms for centuries, and turn our thoughts to literary improvement, in obedience to the precepts of Horace ?

THE  
ART OF ENGLISH POETRY.

ADDRESSED TO THE  
LIVING POETS  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

## EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

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**H**UMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas  
Undique collectis membris, ut turpiter atrem  
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa supernè,  
<sup>1</sup> Spectatum admissi, risum teneatis amici ?

Credite, <sup>2</sup> Pisones, istæ tabulæ fore librum  
Persimilem cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ  
Fingentur species, ut nec pes, nec caput uni  
Reddatur formæ.



THE  
ART OF ENGLISH POETRY.

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IF Whim our wildest artist led,  
For once, to paint a human head  
Join'd to a horse's neck, and shew,  
In various colours clad below,  
Limbs hardly Fancy could avail 5  
To couple, in a fish's tail  
The monster ending, that with grace  
Above adorn'd a woman's face ;  
' Would you not, wondering at his style,  
Who pleased us in the nightmare, smile ? 10  
Own, <sup>2</sup> bards, that such a picture seems  
Scarce stranger, than a book, like dreams  
That scare the sick, with fancies fraught  
Betraying no consistent thought ;  
In which the whole is void of art, 15  
And neither head nor tail a part.  
Taste does not coldly, nor e'er did,  
Inventions somewhat bold forbid ;

Pictoribus atque pœtis

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas;

Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque  
vicissim :

Sed non ut placidis coëant immitia, non ut  
Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni.

Inceptis gravibus plerumque, et magna professis  
Purpureus latè qui splendeat unus et alter

Assuitur pannus; cùm <sup>1</sup> lucus et ara <sup>2</sup> Dianæ,

<sup>3</sup> Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,

<sup>4</sup> Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur  
<sup>5</sup> arcus.

Sed nunc non erat his locus ; et fortasse <sup>6</sup> cupres-  
sum

Scis simulare : quid hoc, si fractis enatat expes  
Navibus, ære dato qui pingitur ? amphora cœpit  
Institui, currente rotâ cur urceus exit ?

The poet's and the painter's tribe  
Both wont with freedom to describe. 20  
We know, and mutually, 'tis true,  
Demand and make the allowance due :  
But fury never let us find  
In mildness : to each other kind  
Nor birds and serpents let us see, 25  
Nor tigers bid with lambs agree.

On labours oft, that boast pretence  
Of plan to higher consequence,  
Some splendid purple patches sewn,  
The attention will arrest alone. 30

<sup>1</sup> With groves at large described, we meet  
Round veil'd <sup>2</sup> Religion's chaste retreat ;  
Or happy language shews, confined  
By verdant banks, enchanting, <sup>3</sup> wind  
<sup>4</sup> The clear Garonne, where mountains range, 35  
<sup>5</sup> And tints of air the landscape change.

Your power confess'd is out of place ;  
For why an <sup>6</sup> oak tree would you trace,  
Employ'd on canvas to express  
The shipwreck'd mariner's distress? 40  
Your art a vase was to reveal ;  
Why comes a pitcher from the wheel ?

Denique sit quidvis simplex duntaxat et unum.

Maxima pars vatum <sup>1</sup> pater et juvenes patre  
digni,

Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro

Obscurus fio : sectantem lævia nervi

Deficiunt animique ; professus grandia turget :

Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellæ.

Qui variare cupit rem prodigaliter unam

Delphinum sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum.

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.

<sup>2</sup> Æmilium circa ludum faber imus et ungues

Exprimet, et molles imitabitur ære capillos,

Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum



Then still let unity attract

The mind, nor beauty's self distract.

Most of us, ' friends of every age, 45

(For none forswears the noble rage)

Some excellence pursuing, fail.

I wish conciseness to prevail

In what I write, and grow obscure ;

Of praise for sweetness too secure, 50

One flows inanimately soft ;

The aspiring strain is turgid oft ;

One, startled at the whirlwind's sound,

Stoops low, and creeps along the ground.

He who, from timid caution free, 55

Too much affects variety,

Will dolphins in a wood display,

And make a boar through ocean stray.

Contempt of a defect may move

To err, if judgment faulty prove. 60

'A sculptor, sought o'er all the space

Of suburbs, beyond Portland-Place,

May well be found, with happy care

Who imitates the nails, or hair ;

Yet hopes in vain to form a whole, 65

And breathe into the bronze a soul.

Nesciet ; hunc ego me, si quid componere curem,  
Non magis esse velim, quam pravo vivere naso,  
Spectandum nigris oculis, nigroque capillo.

Sumite materiem vestris, qui scribitis, æquam  
Viribus ; et versate diu ; quid ferre recusent,  
Quid valeant humeri. Cui lecta potenter erit res,  
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

Ordinis hæc Virtus erit et Venus, aut ego fallor,  
Ut jamnunc dicat, jamnunc debentia dici,  
Pleraque differat, et præsens in tempus omittat,  
Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor.

In verbis etiam tenuis, cautusque serendis,  
Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum

But his perfections I should judge  
As foolish enviously to grudge,  
Were it my office to compose,  
As wish to have a hideous nose, 70  
So I were flatter'd for an eye,  
Or famous locks, of darkest die.

Choose we, who public favour court,  
Those subjects we can well support ;  
And often pausing, find at length 75  
What burden would befit our strength,  
What weight our shoulders would refuse.  
He who his theme can ably choose,  
With fluent eloquence unites  
Each charm of order, as he writes. 80  
In this appears that order's force,  
I deem, to which he has recourse,  
That sometimes, unrestrain'd, he say  
What Fancy dictates ; but delay  
As often much it may suggest, 85  
That uselessly were yet express'd.  
Careful new terms, your powers command,  
To scatter with a sparing hand,  
You wisely might your views confine  
Well known expressions so to join, 90

Reddiderit junctura novum : si fortè necesse est  
Indiciis monstrare recentibus <sup>1</sup> abdita rerum,  
Fingere <sup>2</sup> cinctutis non exaudita <sup>3</sup> Cethegis  
Continget, dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter.  
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si  
Græco fonte cadant, parcè detorta. Quid autem?  
<sup>4</sup> Cæcilio, <sup>5</sup> Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum  
<sup>6</sup> Virgilio, <sup>7</sup> Varioque? Ego cur acquirere pauca,  
Si possim, invideor, cum lingua <sup>8</sup> Catonis et <sup>9</sup> Ennî  
Sermonem patriam ditaverit, et novum rerum  
Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit  
<sup>10</sup> Signatum <sup>11</sup> præsentē notâ procudere nummum.



That they with novelty might please.  
Yet if you would unfold with ease  
Knowledge, that to our stores could add  
¹ Philosophy, or good, or bad;  
Then frame, with Fancy's lawful aid, 95  
Terms of such texture, as had made  
Old ²Hastings, with his formal air,  
³ In satin doublet dancing, stare.  
Nor will you from right reason swerve,  
If, ever cautious, you preserve 100  
The clear and simple style of Greece.  
Should rules, from which you would release  
⁴ Shakspeare and ⁵ Dryden, starchly sway  
The school of ⁶ Mason and of ⁷ Gray?  
Why am I grudged the sober use 105  
Of aught I venture to produce,  
When ⁸ Temple's, and when ⁹ Milton's phrase  
So mix'd a character displays;  
And what was written thus, or sung,  
So much enrich'd our native tongue? 110  
We look in course for, from the mint,  
¹⁰ New money, if it but imprint  
The features of the ¹¹ reigning king.  
As change the autumnal tempests bring

Ut sylvis folia pronos mutantur in annos ;  
Prima cadunt : ita verborum vetus interit ætas,  
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.

Debemur morti nos, nostraque ; <sup>1</sup> sive receptus  
Terrâ Neptunus classes Aquilonibus arcet,

<sup>2</sup> Regis opus ; sterilisve palus prius aptaque remis  
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum :

Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,  
Doctus iter melius : mortalia cuncta peribunt  
Necdum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax.

Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere ; cadentque  
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula ; si volet usus,  
Quem penès arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.

Res gestæ <sup>3</sup> regumque ducumque, et tristia bella

To groves, and scatter on the ground 115  
Old leaves, that new may rise around ;  
So words pass off that once had grace,  
And others flourish in their place.

Our labours, and ourselves as they,  
Alike are subject to decay. 120

' Whether, connecting coast with coast,  
(A 'British king's and people's boast)  
The navigable wave is led  
Through towns ; or marshes, late o'erspread  
With dreary pools, and useless, now 125  
Productive made, admit the plough ;  
Or streams, from culture that surrounds  
Diverted, flow in certain bounds ;  
All earthly things must have an end,  
Nor only language can contend 130  
With fate. Words may, however old,  
Revive, and many that unfold  
Our daily thoughts, not long remain,  
If powerful Custom so ordain ;  
Call'd to prescribe the bounds, and teach 135  
The universal rules of speech.

What measure the relation needs,  
' Of heaven's, or earth's heroic deeds

Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus.

<sup>1</sup> Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primùm,  
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos,  
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiseric auctor,  
Grammatici certant, et adhuc <sup>2</sup> sub iudice lis est.

<sup>3</sup> Archilochum <sup>4</sup> proprio rabies armavit Iambo.

<sup>5</sup> Hunc socci cepere pedem, grandesque cothurni,  
Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populares  
Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.

Musa dedit fidibus divos <sup>6</sup> puerosque deorum,  
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum  
<sup>7</sup> Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.



Milton points out, unless I err ;  
Though some a different verse prefer. 140  
But less do judges disagree  
On that which soothes in Elegy.  
<sup>1</sup> A stanza that four equal lines,  
Framed of five feet, distinctly joins,  
With rhymes alternate, pleases most. 145  
Critics that would its fitness boast  
For other strains, through the repute  
Of bards <sup>2</sup> relinquish'd their dispute.  
<sup>3</sup> Pope well, for satire, Spleen alarm'd  
With his <sup>4</sup> own iron couplets arm'd ; 150  
<sup>5</sup> Which verse the drama chose to quit,  
Experience proving it unfit  
To enforce belief of feign'd distress ;  
And still to copy manners less,  
That, all their nicer grace to save, 155  
Exactest imitation crave.  
To sing of peaceful deeds, or one  
In battle brave as <sup>6</sup> Ammon's son ;  
Or, to the skies, in lasting lays,  
The passions, virtues, arts, to raise ; 160  
<sup>7</sup> Or joys with which the bosom glow'd  
Of frolic Youth, has waked the Ode.

Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,  
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?  
Cur nescire, pudens pravè, quàm discere malo?  
¹ Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.  
Indignatur item privatis et prope socco  
Dignis carminibus narrari ² cœna Thyestæ.  
Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decenter.  
Interdum tamen et vocem Comœdia tollit,  
Iratusque ³ Chremes tumido delitigat ore;  
Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.  
⁴ Telephus aut ⁵ Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque  
⁶ Projicit ampullas, et sesquipedalia verba,

Why, if I fail to keep apart  
The styles peculiar to each art,  
Grace foreign to the work my aim, 165  
A poet's honour do I claim?  
Why scorn, the silly title sought  
Of genius, knowledge, if untaught?  
<sup>1</sup> No genuine comic bard would choose  
The cumbrous clog of verse to use; 170  
Nor would he write with tragic force,  
Who in the language of discourse,  
Guilt's dread by shadowy shapes increased,  
Display'd <sup>2</sup> Macbeth's terrific feast.

Styles Nature ne'er together link'd 175  
Eternally be kept distinct!  
Yet 'tis in comedy no fault,  
If even her voice she should exalt;  
And, with genteel vexation warm,  
<sup>3</sup> Lord Townly is still heard to storm. 180  
Nor always tragedy alike  
With swelling diction seeks to strike:  
<sup>4</sup> Wolsey and <sup>5</sup> Buckingham, now lost  
Their hopes, and proud ambition cross'd,  
Must simply give their feelings vent, 185  
<sup>6</sup> To drop the minister content,

Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse loquelâ.

Non satis est pulchra esse poëmata ; dulcia sunt,

Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.

Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent

Humani vultus ; si vis me flere, dolendum est

Primum ipsi tibi ; tunc tua me infortunia lædent.

Telephe vel Peleu, male si mandata loqueris,

Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo : tristia mœstum

Vultum verba decent ; iratum, plena minarum ;

Ludentem, lasciva ; severum, seria dictu.

Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem

Fortunarum habitum ; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,

Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit, et angit :

Post effert animi motus interprete linguâ.

Si dicentis erunt fortunis absono dicta,

Romani tollent ' equites, peditesque cachinnum.

If to claim pity they presume,  
Or fix attention on their doom.

Works should not only strike, but please,  
Conducted with all Nature's ease ; 190

And without violence, where'er  
They choose, the willing reader bear.

Sad as their spirits we perceive  
The countenance of those who grieve ;  
Nor, speaking thoughtlessly, will he 195  
Who suffers, pity raise in me.

Wolsey and Buckingham, a flow  
Of words unapt in scenes of woe  
Might make me at your fate, not weep,  
But either laugh or fall asleep. 200

The man in sorrow his regret  
Will utter, and the angry threat :  
The language of the gay, 'tis clear,  
Is sportive ; grave, of the severe.

The tongue invariably relates 205

The person's feelings, and his fates :  
And he who, writing for the stage,  
The attention would with scraps engage  
Of eloquence, and nothing more,

Would set an audience in a roar. 210



Intererit multum, <sup>1</sup> Divusne loquatur an <sup>2</sup> heros;  
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventâ  
Fervidus; an <sup>3</sup> matrona potens, an <sup>4</sup> sedula nutrix;  
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;  
<sup>6</sup> Colchus, an Assyrius; <sup>5</sup> Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

Aut famam sequere, aut convenientia finge  
Scriptor. <sup>7</sup> Homeræum si forte reponis <sup>8</sup> Achil-  
lem,

<sup>9</sup> Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer;  
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.  
<sup>10</sup> Sit Medea ferox invictaque, <sup>11</sup> flebilis Ino,  
<sup>12</sup> Perfidus Ixion, <sup>13</sup> Io vaga,

Let different styles some <sup>1</sup> king of old  
Distinguish from his <sup>2</sup> barons bold ;  
Grey-headed age, of judgment cool,  
From youth that boisterous passions rule ;  
<sup>3</sup> The seemly matron, raised by birth, 215  
From <sup>4</sup> the low nurse of vulgar mirth ;  
The merchant, ever used to roam,  
From him who tills his fields at home ;  
And where the character is born  
In <sup>5</sup> Europe, or in <sup>6</sup> Asia, warn. 220

Be still consistent, whether you  
Old fables choose, or fancy new.  
If <sup>7</sup> Shakspeare's <sup>8</sup> Richard you revive,  
<sup>9</sup> Shew him surpassing all alive  
In dark hypocrisy and guile, 225  
Cruel, and spite of valour, vile.  
<sup>10</sup> Shew Alexander bent to reign  
O'er all things, generous, brave, and vain ;  
<sup>11</sup> Cato, in danger and distress  
More glorious than his foe's success ; 230  
<sup>12</sup> The queen of Egypt, true to love,  
And scorning hostile rage, above  
The woman's lot, in death, of fear ;  
<sup>13</sup> Brutus disposed, alone sincere,

tristis • Orestes.

Si quid inexpertum scenæ committis, et audes  
Personam formare novam ; servetur ad imum  
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

Difficile est propriè communia dicere ; tuque  
² Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,  
Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

Publica materies privati juris erit, si  
Non circa vilem, patulumque moraberis orbem ;  
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus  
Interpres ; nec desilies imitator in arctum,

To free (from power the usurper hurl'd) 235  
A land ; <sup>1</sup> Caractacus, a world.

But if that enterprize be meant  
Of utmost daring, to invent,  
The creature of your fancy make  
Throughout the same, nor let him take 240  
A stamp that would have shewn the man  
Far different, when the play began.  
Yet still the enterprize is hard,  
<sup>2</sup> And you would be a doughty bard,  
Encountering greater risk to fail, 245  
From your own head to form a tale,  
Than duly on the stage to bring  
The history of an English king.  
To ancient stories you, in short,  
Have every license to resort, 250  
If neither, wanting native nerve,  
Constrain'd, the order you preserve  
Of some known poem ; nor each word  
Translate, a servile part preferr'd ;  
Nor are entangled in the course 255  
Of imitation's task perforce ;  
That bids you to your work transfer  
Such thoughts as would not else occur,

Unde pedem proferre pudor vetat, aut operis lex.

Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus olim :

<sup>1</sup> *Fortunam Priami cantabo et nobile bellum.*

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu ?

Parturiunt montes : nascetur ridiculus mus.

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte !

<sup>2</sup> *Dic mihi Musa, virum, captæ post mœnia Trojæ*

*Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.*

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,

<sup>3</sup> Antiphaten, <sup>4</sup> Scyllamque, et cum <sup>5</sup> Cyclope

<sup>6</sup> Charybdin.

<sup>7</sup> Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,

<sup>8</sup> Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo :

Semper ad eventum festinat, et in medias res,

Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit ; et quæ



And as, though forced upon you, seem  
Yet foreign to the general theme. 260

Nor, like a ballad, e'er begin  
Your work, that with vexatious din,  
By some old woman in our ear  
Still sounded, summons <sup>1</sup> *all to bear*.  
To what a strait a bard were driven 265

The promise to perform so given !  
The labouring mountain teems, no doubt,  
Yet nothing but a mouse creeps out.  
From such how different seems the song  
Of him we find so seldom wrong. 270

Simply he speaks, without pretence,  
<sup>2</sup> *Of man's first disobedience*.

He fire from smoke, not smoke from fire,  
Calls forth, preparing us to admire

<sup>3</sup> Fair Eden's groves, for ever green, 275

<sup>4</sup> Hell, <sup>5</sup> Chaos, and <sup>6</sup> Creation's scene.

<sup>7</sup> Nor did he wish, in Alfred's praise,

One work to reach from Egbert's days ;

<sup>8</sup> Nor had with Uther's acts begun

To celebrate his far-famed son. 280

Still the main subject kept in view,  
The hearer he, as if he knew

Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit :  
Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi ;  
• Si fautoris eges <sup>2</sup> aulæa manentis, et <sup>3</sup> usque  
Sessuri, donec cantor, vos plaudite, dicat :

Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,  
Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.  
Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, et pede certo  
Signat humum ; gestit paribus colludere, et iram  
Colligit, ac ponit temerè, et mutatur in horas.

Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,  
Gaudet equis canibusque, et aprici gramine campi ;  
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,  
Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus æris,

Whate'er preceded, while he sings,  
Transports into the midst of things ;  
And slight events, appearing such 285  
As could not please, forbears to touch.  
While truth and fancy he combines,  
So the well order'd poem shines,  
That all, beginning, middle, end,  
To one unvaried purpose tend. 290

Learn what, as your allotted task,  
The public as myself would ask,  
1 Would you the lounge, at your play,  
2 Quite to the curtain's fall delay,  
3 One actor seen, with archer glance, 295  
To speak the epilogue advance.  
Observant of all round you, scan  
The manners of each age in man.  
The boy seeks playmates of like years,  
Pettish, yet placable appears. 300  
The youth, from tutors hardly free,  
Of hounds and horses fond we see,  
Or, wilder daily, in renown  
For every folly of the town ;  
Rejecting formal, dull advice ; 305  
Lost all he borrows in a trice ;

Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.

Conversis studiis, ætas animusque virilis

Quærit opes, et amicitias, inservit honori ;

Commisisse cavet, quod mox mutare laboret.

Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda ; vel  
quod

Quærit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti ;

Vel quod res omnes timidè gelidèque ministrat,

Dilator, spe lentus, iners, pavidusque futuri ;

Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti

Se puero, censor, castigatorque minorum.

Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda secum,

Multa recedentes adimunt ; ne forte seniles

Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.

Semper in adjunctis ævoque morabimur aptis.

Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur :

Segnior irritant animos demissa per aurem,

Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ

Ipse sibi tradit spectator. Non tamen intus

Presumptuous, eager, and by fits  
Desiring what, enjoy'd, he quits.

To one, by time more steady grown,  
The value well of things is known ; 310  
He makes great friends, and only dreams  
Of interest's, and ambition's schemes.

Old men shew either a desire  
As much to hoard as to acquire,  
Or weakness, in a pausing will, 315  
And constant fear of fancied ill :  
Peevish and plaintive, loud in praise  
Of past, and blame of present days.  
Each age of blessings is possess'd,  
Peculiar, and denied the rest. 320  
You then in fiction would do wrong  
O'erlooking what to one belong.

The audience either learn from one  
Who speaks, or witness what is done.  
Far feebler the effect we find 325  
Of what we hear upon our mind,  
Than what we instantly espy  
Presented to the faithful eye,  
And judge of by ourselves alone.  
Yet things, improper to be shewn 330



Digna geri promes in scenam : multaque tolles  
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret <sup>1</sup> facundia præsens :  
<sup>2</sup> Ne pueros coram popula Media trucidet ;  
<sup>3</sup> Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus ;  
<sup>4</sup> Aut in avem Procne vertatur, <sup>5</sup> Cadmus in an-  
guem.

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

<sup>6</sup> Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu  
Fabula, quæ posci vult, et spectata reponi.

<sup>7</sup> Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus

<sup>8</sup> Inciderit ; nec quarta loqui persona laboret.

<sup>9</sup> Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile

By their own nature, were conceal'd  
With judgment first, and then reveal'd  
In such narrations as suffice,

<sup>1</sup> More eloquent, as more concise.

<sup>2</sup> Let not just Cato, harshly fierce, 335  
Himself before his daughters pierce ;

<sup>3</sup> Nor welt'ring toil in view to bring  
The drunken grooms and Scotland's king.

<sup>4</sup> Not witchcraft's bard had made one steed  
Of Duncan on another feed 340

Before us, <sup>5</sup> nor the example gives  
Of beldams sailing in their sieves.

Unlikely, fruitless fictions must,  
Save in uncommon strains, disgust.

<sup>6</sup> Plays of five acts did Taste decree 345  
Of old ; now sometimes counsels three.

<sup>7</sup> To call imp, sprite, to aid your plot  
And cut the fable's gordian knot

(A license suiting well a mask !)  
Seems not the serious writer's task. 350

<sup>8</sup> Nor yet by judgment would a crowd  
Of needless speakers be allow'd.

<sup>9</sup> Though now a chorus, laws ordain,  
No poet, as of old, restrain,

Defendat : <sup>1</sup> neu quid medios intercinat actus,  
 Quod non proposito conducat, et hæreat aptè,  
<sup>2</sup> Ille bonis faveatque, et concilietur amicis,  
 Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes :  
 Ille dapes<sup>3</sup> laudet mensæ brevīs, ille salubrem  
 Justitiam, legesque, et apertis otia portis ;  
 Ille tegat commissa, deosque precetur et oret,  
 Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.

<sup>3</sup> Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco juncta, <sup>4</sup> tubæque  
 Æmula ; sed tenuis, <sup>5</sup> simplexque foramine paucò,  
 Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque  
<sup>6</sup> Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flatu ;  
 Quo sane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus  
 Et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.

Our subject suiting, we may choose 355  
The art's united aid to use,  
And waken Music, to increase  
Twofold the importance of the piece.  
A chorus, <sup>1</sup> mindful of its end,  
Still to its office may attend; 360  
<sup>2</sup> May favouring prompt, with counsels sage,  
The good; may check the oppressor's rage;  
Love those the fear of guilt alarms;  
Praise Temperance, Justice, and the charms  
Of Peace; or, witnesses of all 365  
That passes, unknown blessings call  
From Heaven on the afflicted down;  
And on the proud bid Fortune frown.  
<sup>3</sup> No band endued with power to thrill,  
<sup>4</sup> And rival Tragedy in skill, 370  
Trailing with pomp her regal robe,  
Composed the orchestra of the Globe.  
<sup>5</sup> More simple sounds by those beneath  
From the balcony heard to breathe,  
Sufficed an audience to delight, 375  
Plain, sober, frugal, on the sight  
Intent, as o'er a pit they stood  
<sup>6</sup> Half-fill'd, in theatres of wood.

- <sup>1</sup> Postquam cœpit agros extendere victor, et urbem  
Laxior amplecti murus, <sup>2</sup> vinoque diurno  
Placari genius fessis impune diebus,  
<sup>3</sup> Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major.  
<sup>4</sup> Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum  
Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?  
Sic priscæ motumque et luxuriam addidit arti  
Tibicen, <sup>5</sup> traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem:  
<sup>6</sup> Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,  
Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceps;  
Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri,  
<sup>7</sup> Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.  
Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,  
Mox etiam agrestes Satyros nudavit, et asper



- <sup>1</sup> But when the city, spreading round,  
New limits now began to bound, 380  
And <sup>2</sup> growing Luxury display'd  
The triumphs of unrivall'd trade,  
<sup>3</sup> The various instruments combined  
To allure, that rouse the ravish'd mind.  
<sup>4</sup> More welcome, as refinement more 385  
Inform'd the judgment than before,  
Musicians came from every land;  
Nor fill'd, between the acts, the band  
Their tedious intervals alone,  
But <sup>5</sup> graced with many a helpful tone, 390  
The voice of actors on the stage,  
Robed in the dress of every age.  
<sup>6</sup> From thence a choir employ'd to teach  
Virtue, might ancient reverence reach,  
<sup>7</sup> If those at Westminster so well 395  
Could of celestial glories tell  
In hymns, accordant notes, the while,  
Re-echoing through the solemn pile.  
He who first sought, in times remote,  
The tragic victor's prize, a goat, 400  
Brought on his stage the Satyrs rude,  
Provoking smiles in gamesome mood,

Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit, eo quod  
 Illecebris erat et gratâ novitate morandus  
 Spectator, functusque sacris, et potus; et exlex.  
<sup>1</sup> Verum ita risores, ita commendare dicaces  
 Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo;  
 Ne quicumque Deus, quicumque adhibebitur heros,  
 Regali conspectus in auro nuper et ostro,  
 Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas:  
 Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captat.  
<sup>2</sup> Effutire leves indigna tragœdia versus;  
<sup>3</sup> Ut festis matrona moveri jussa diebus,  
<sup>4</sup> Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.

Though oft the motley piece was fraught  
With serious and impassion'd thought.

Our country too we may believe, 405

Would not less willingly receive

Such customs, holding all allow'd

Its bards, that gratifies the crowd.

<sup>1</sup> But should reflection timely move

The sober critic to approve 410

Works of such mingled nature, he

Must so require the parts to agree,

And mirth connection so disclose

With gravity, and verse with prose,

That neither king nor prince who speaks 415

And dresses nobly, when he seeks

Some humble mansion, should debase

With jests too coarse his royal race,

Nor, his familiar manners shewn,

Be scarce again as mortal known. 420

<sup>2</sup> No vice of Tragedy is worse

Than language mean, in prose or verse :

<sup>3</sup> As coy reserve the modest maid

Shews in the sportive masquerade;

<sup>4</sup> So conscious dignity is seen 425

Though boors jest round her, in her mien.

<sup>1</sup> Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum,  
Verbaque, Piones, <sup>2</sup> Satyrorum scriptor, amabo :  
Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,  
Ut nihil intersit <sup>3</sup> Davusne loquatur, <sup>5</sup> et audax  
Pythias, <sup>4</sup> emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,  
An <sup>7</sup> custos famulusque Dei <sup>6</sup> Silenus alumni.  
<sup>8</sup> Ex noto fictum carmen sequar : ut sibi quivis  
Speret idem ; sudet multum, frustra que laboret  
Ausus idem : <sup>9</sup> tantum series juncturaque pollet :  
<sup>10</sup> Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris.  
<sup>11</sup> Sylvis deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,  
Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses,  
<sup>12</sup> Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus unquam,

<sup>1</sup> I would not, <sup>2</sup> though two styles I mix,  
On words, dramatic brothers, fix  
Too common, nor my end but half  
Attain, content to raise a laugh; 430  
So that no difference be made  
By nice discriminating shade  
Of character, between the address  
Of <sup>3</sup> Francis, or <sup>4</sup> when beadles press,  
<sup>5</sup> Bold Dorothy, and <sup>6</sup> Henry, known 435  
<sup>7</sup> As heir apparent to the throne.

<sup>8</sup> If awe of rule the spirit damp  
Of poets, and their genius cramp;  
Following the example which our stage  
Has furnish'd, in a former age, 440  
Even they would such productions boast,  
<sup>9</sup> As bards, by science prompted most,  
Might strive to equal, and yet fail:  
So much does inborn art avail!

<sup>10</sup> So much may works, howe'er attack'd 445  
By taste as barbarous, attract!

<sup>11</sup> Their language should distinguish clowns  
From those of lofty birth in towns.

Such, nor does midnight courtship suit,  
<sup>12</sup> Nor love-songs warbled to the lute; 450



• Aut immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.

Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, et pater et res;  
Nec, si quid <sup>2</sup> fricti ciceris probat et nucis emptor,  
<sup>3</sup> Æquis accipiunt animis, donantve coronâ.

• <sup>4</sup> Syllaba longa brevi subjecta, vocatur Iambus,  
Pes citus: unde etiam trimetris accrescere jussit  
Nomen Iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus  
Primus ad extremum similis sibi; non ita pridem,  
<sup>5</sup> Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad aures,  
Spondeos stabiles in jura paterna recepit  
Commodus et patiens: non ut de sede secundâ  
Cederet, aut quartâ socialiter. Hic et in <sup>6</sup> Acci  
Nobilibus trimetris apparet rarus, et <sup>7</sup> Ennî.

- <sup>1</sup> Yet with low ribaldry to excite  
A roar of laughter, marks not quite  
The bard, less diligent <sup>2</sup> a pack  
Of bawlers, as their nuts they crack  
O'er the wide gallery, to please, 455  
<sup>3</sup> Than minds, true merit taught to seize.  
Yet, rather than suppose that art  
Gives not a grace to every part,  
Learn, that correctness should adorn  
Even metre, nor can merit scorn. 460  
<sup>4</sup> Two syllables, the short first put,  
Composes the Iambic foot ;  
(Long thus entitled) which, too oft  
Repeated, though its flow be soft,  
Gives rhyme an ill effect, a worse, 465  
Itself unaided, to blank verse.  
<sup>5</sup> But justly modulated lines  
Our drama to five feet confines,  
Though adding sometimes at their close  
A syllable ; and less in those 470  
Will hardly possible admit,  
When finish'd tragedy is writ.  
<sup>6</sup> Shakspeare's and <sup>7</sup> Otway's fluent strains  
Which mark the poet without pains

In scenam missus magno cum pondere versus,  
¹ Aut operæ celeris nimium, curaque carentis  
Aut ² ignoratæ premit artis crimine turpi.  
³ Non quivis videt immodulata poemata judex ;  
⁴ Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis,  
Idcircone vager, scribamque licenter ? ut omnes  
Visuiros peccata putem mea ; tutus et intra  
Spem veniæ cautus ? Vitavi denique culpam,  
Non laudem merui. ⁵ Vos exemplaria Græca  
Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.  
At vestri proavi ⁶ Plautinos et numeros, et

Composing, yet have less to mourn 475

(Their early rudeness better born)

Than such as, in this age, through <sup>1</sup> haste,

Are tuneless, or through <sup>2</sup> biass'd taste.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the many do not see

What works with critic rules agree ; 480

<sup>4</sup> And hence, accustom'd to escape

Wide censure, British writers shape

Their course at will, not bound by one,

Esteem such lifeless laws as none.

What then am I to do? Compose 485

Still incorrectly? Or suppose

That all with scrutinizing look

Must scan my work, and every book ;

And lose that freedom which exalts

The style, to be exempt from faults? 490

<sup>5</sup> Here you may justly, o'er and o'er,

Critics, extol that classic lore

The country estimates aright,

Its youth enjoining, day and night,

To meditate the labours chaste 495

Of Greece, and those of rival taste.

<sup>6</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher, with their strokes

Of shameless mirth, and wanton jokes,

<sup>1</sup> Laudavere sales? nimium patienter utrumque  
(Ne dicam stultè) mirati : si modo ego et vos  
Scimus inurbanum lepidò seponere dicto,

<sup>2</sup> Legitimumque sonum digito callemus et aure.

Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ  
Dicitur, et plaustriis vexisse poemata Thespis  
Quæ canerent, agerentque, peruncti fœcibus ora.  
Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor <sup>3</sup> honestæ  
Eschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,  
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.  
Successit vetus hīs Comœdia, non sine multâ



• The taste of your forefathers hit,  
Though deem'd to live in days of wit ; 500  
Reflection all of us may move  
Their judgment now to disapprove.  
If simply we the means possess  
Just humour, in its native dress,  
Stripp'd of obscenity, to know, 505  
• Or scenes that life's full image show.  
A mimic song, 'tis said, at first,  
Was Tragedy, by those dispersed  
Around the hamlets heard, where'er  
The inventor Thespis chose to bear 510  
His company ; who shew'd their art,  
Their faces smearing, from his cart.  
Next Eschylus the robe and mask,  
Which Decency <sup>3</sup> then seem'd to ask,  
Added not only ; but, a stage 515  
Constructing, fix'd as any age  
Has since beheld, the actor raised  
On lofty buskins ; and amazed  
His audience, from the exalted floor,  
With his bold strains, unmatch'd before. 520  
The ancient Comedy appear'd  
Ere long, and flourish'd ; nor was fear'd

Laude: sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim.

Dignam lege regi: lex est accepta; Chorusque  
Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.

<sup>1</sup> Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ:

<sup>2</sup> Nec minimum meruere decus, <sup>3</sup> vestigia Græca  
Ausi deserere, et celebrare <sup>6</sup> domestica facta,

<sup>4</sup> Vel qui Prætextas, <sup>5</sup> vel qui docuere Togatas.

<sup>7</sup> Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis,

Quam linguâ, <sup>8</sup> Latium; si non offenderet <sup>9</sup> unum-  
Quemque poetarum limæ labor et mora. Vos O,

<sup>10</sup> Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non

Its power, in future, to amuse :

But this too ready to abuse,

And grown too scurrilous in mirth,

525

Few years did it survive its birth ;

A chorus, little proved in awe

Of decency, forbid by law.

<sup>1</sup> Our writers yet with those most famed

For various merit may be named :

530

<sup>2</sup> Nor is the credit trifling, due

To such as cared not to pursue

The path our neighbours did, and seek

<sup>3</sup> Tales chiefly they had read in Greek ;

But <sup>4</sup> whether gaily, in a coat

535

Of modern cut, or times remote

Portray'd, and <sup>5</sup> dress of formal kind,

<sup>6</sup> Domestic characters design'd.

<sup>7</sup> And even more praise in arts than arms,

Which have for wisdom fewer charms,

540

Had honour'd <sup>8</sup> either British isle,

Had not the labour of the file

Affrighted poets, while <sup>9</sup> their race

The laws of writing *did transgress*.

<sup>10</sup> But you, that to my strain attend,

545

O hear the counsel of a friend,

Multa dies et multa litura coercuit, atque  
Præsectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

<sup>1</sup> Ingenium miserâ quia fortunatior arte  
Credidit, et excludit sanos Helicone poetas  
Democritus ; bona pars non ungues ponere curat,  
Non barbâ, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.  
Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poetæ,  
Si <sup>2</sup> tribus <sup>3</sup> Anticyris caput insanabile nunquam  
Tonsori Licino commiserit. <sup>4</sup> O ego lævus  
Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam !  
<sup>5</sup> Non alius faceret meliora poemata : verum

Which warns you less that work to esteem,  
In which the author did not seem  
On each assistant polish bent,  
Long days in its correction spent. 550

<sup>1</sup> Because with justice Johnson held  
Bright Genius plodding Art excell'd,  
Methinks there are, to be revered,  
Who soon will scorn to lose their beard ;  
Will nurse their nails, and, to be seen 555  
In lonely spots with pensive mien,  
Fly haunts, disproving not pretence  
To the dull claim of common sense,  
For all, most surely, must regard  
As some rare prodigy, the bard 560  
Whose head its honours, never thinn'd  
By barber, sporting in the wind,  
Not the famed doctor could make sound,  
Where his <sup>2</sup> three potent charms, of ground  
Water and wood, round <sup>3</sup> Lincoln meet 565  
To soothe him in the still retreat.

<sup>4</sup> O ill starr'd I, whom scruples warn  
To wash both hands and face at morn :  
<sup>5</sup> Else might I be what wits require,  
Might seem possess'd of native fire ; 570



Non tanti est : ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum  
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipse secandi.  
Munus et officium nil scribens ipse, docebo :  
Unde parentur opes ; quid alat formatque poetam ;  
Quid deceat, quid non ; quo virtus, quo ferat error.

Scribendi rectè, sapere est et principium et fons.  
Rem tibi • Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ ;  
Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.  
Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis ;  
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hos-  
pes ;

Quod sit \* conscripti, quod judicis officium ; quæ

And praised with patriots of these times,  
Trip in the poetaster's rhymes.  
But 'tis no matter. Then let me,  
Unnoticed, like a whetstone be,  
Of use to sharpen steel alone ; 575  
No edge experienced of its own.  
Thus others will I teach in fame  
To glory, I must needs disclaim ;  
Point out the poet's true resource ;  
What gives his growing fancy force ; 580  
Both what unfit appears, and fit,  
And springs from folly or from wit.

Spite of presumptuous pride, good sense  
Is the sole source of excellence.

Let <sup>1</sup> Addison's sage tomes inform 585  
Your mind, and, with the subject warm,  
You will, in words that from it flow,  
The fittest elocution show.

Knowing what duty at his hand  
Expects, to serve his native land, 590  
Parent, or brother, friend, or guest ;  
Or what portraying touches best  
Would with each character accord,  
Brave chief, just judge, or <sup>2</sup> powerful lord ;

Partes in bellum missi ducis ; ille profecto  
Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.  
Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo  
Doctum imitatore, et veras hinc ducere voces.  
Interdum speciosa locis, morataque rectè  
Fabula, nullius Veneris, sine pondere et arte,  
Valdiùs oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,  
Quam versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.

Graiiis ingenium, Graiiis dedit ore rotundo  
Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.

<sup>1</sup> Romani pueri longis rationibus assem  
Discunt in partes centum diducere. Dicas

<sup>2</sup> Filius Albini, <sup>3</sup> si de quincunce remota est

Uncia, quid superat ? Poteras dixisse triens. Eu !

, Rem poteris servare tuam.

His work the poet will not mar, 595  
Nor oft from excellence be far.  
He may look round on life besides,  
Of error fearful, and as guides  
There searching for examples, see  
How with those precepts they agree. 600  
Sometimes right reason so display'd,  
Though art contribute little aid,  
In draughts from nature not unlike  
With some just sentiments, will strike  
The public more, than studied sounds 605  
Tinkling, where common thought abounds.

To the bless'd Greeks the Muse assign'd  
Genius and eloquence, their mind  
No avarice warping, nor their aim  
Aught else but the pursuit of fame. 610  
Our <sup>1</sup> English youth on gain are made  
To ponder, in this clime of trade.  
Let <sup>2</sup> I——'s son be skill'd to tell  
At what a copy-right will sell,  
And if it can his pockets fill, 615  
<sup>3</sup> When he deducts the printer's bill.  
Suppose it told : I praise him, he,  
If wise, may from distress be free :

Redit uncia : quid fit ?

Semis. An hæc animos ærugo et cura peculi  
Cum semel imbuerit, speramus carmina fingi

<sup>1</sup> Posse linenda cedro, et <sup>2</sup> levi servanda cupresso ?

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poetæ ;  
Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.

Quidquid præcipies, esto brevis : ut cito dicta  
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.  
Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.

Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris :  
Ne, quodcunque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi ;  
Neu <sup>3</sup> pransæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.



But when these views of interest taint  
The soul, must not all hope be faint 620  
That poems, the sole fruit of pelf,  
Seem worthy, taken from the shelf,  
¹ With type, and hot-press'd page, as fine  
² As their exterior gay to shine ?

Their pieces poets, or for use, 625  
Or entertainment, all produce ;  
Or both ; their auditors to mend  
And gratify, their equal end.

Let all your precepts be concise :  
If briefly given, your advice 630  
Attention sooner will obtain,  
And longer in the mind remain :  
Where largely pour'd, it will not stay,  
But, as o'erflowing, pass away.

We well should notice what agrees 635  
With truth and nature, would we please ;  
Nor dream to find in many, dolts  
Whom utter nonsense ne'er revolts.  
The rueful carnage feign'd by some  
Would emulate ³ the feats of Thumb, 640  
Prizing the life of man as dross ;  
Or Chrononhotonthologos.

<sup>1</sup> Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis :

<sup>2</sup> Celsi prætereunt austera poemata Rhamnes.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,  
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

<sup>3</sup> Hic meret æra liber Sosiis, hic et mare transit,  
Et longum noto scriptori prorogat ævum.

Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus.  
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem vult manus  
et mens ;

Poscentique gravem persæpe remittit acutum :

<sup>4</sup> Nec semper feriet, quodcunque minabitur arcus.  
Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,  
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

<sup>1</sup> Grave, moral scenes the pit alike,  
And gallery, can with maxims, strike :  
At which, by love of pleasure drawn, 645  
<sup>2</sup> The front-box loungers laugh, or yawn.

The work most merits, which unites  
Both what improves us, and delights.

<sup>3</sup> This Edwards sells, more proudly bound,  
This vessels waft the world around ; 650  
And this, to authors born obscure,  
Can immortality ensure.

But not, in strictness, is required  
All excellence, to be admired.  
Faults may find pardon, we have own'd : 655  
For, out of tune, and badly toned,  
The harmonious string, as oft 'tis found,  
Will send an unexpected sound ;

<sup>4</sup> And, even by our fair archers tried,  
The bow will sometimes carry wide. 660  
But when, in the less perfect lines  
Prevailing, inspiration shines,  
Why should I, because spleen directs,  
Condemn aloud a few defects,  
Which may to casual haste be due, 665  
Or but from human weakness grew ?

Quid ergo est?

Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,  
Quamvis est monitus, veniâ caret ; ut citharædus  
Ridetur, chordâ qui semper oberrat eâdem ;  
Sic mihi qui multum cessat, <sup>1</sup> fit Chærilus ille,  
Quem bis terve bonum, cum risu miror ; et idem  
Indignor, quandoque <sup>2</sup> bonus dormitat Homerus.  
Verum opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.

Ut pictura, poesis : erit quæ, si proprius stes,  
Te capiat magis ; et quædam, si longius abstes :  
Hæc amat obscurum ; volet hæc sub luce videri,  
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen :  
Hæc placuit semel ; hæc decies repetita placebit.

<sup>3</sup> O major juvenum, quamvis et <sup>4</sup> voce paternâ

What then are we to think ? As, used  
To admonition, unexcused  
Errs the transcriber ; or as keeps  
The harper, while his strings he sweeps, 670  
A stubborn habit, caution'd much  
Against it, yet the wrong to touch ;  
So bards, on wing too prone to sink,  
' Like honest Blackmore I should think,  
Whom smiling, as with wonder seiz'd, 675  
I praise, if haply he has pleased ;  
But, when in <sup>2</sup> Milton I have look'd,  
His slumbers rare I scarcely brook'd,  
Though careful not to blame, as wrong,  
In works as weighty as his song. 680

For poetry, like painting, strikes  
The sense ; in both the observer likes  
Some parts brought near ; some farther mov'd ;  
Some in the shade are most approv'd ;  
While some the dreaded judge's eye, 685  
Seen plainly in the light, defy ;  
Some once alone the glance invite,  
And some repeatedly delight.  
' O bards of judgment sound, whoe'er  
Ye are that, <sup>4</sup> by parental care 690



Fingeris ad rectum, et <sup>1</sup> per te sapis ; hoc tibi dictum  
Tolle memor : certis medium et tolerabile rebus  
Rectè concedi : <sup>2</sup> consultus juris, et actor  
Causarum mediocris, abest <sup>4</sup> virtute disertis  
Messalæ, nec <sup>3</sup> scit quantum Cascellius Aulus ;  
Sed tamen in pretio est : mediocribus esse poetis  
<sup>5</sup> Non homines, non Dî, non concessere columnæ.  
Ut <sup>9</sup> gratas inter mensas <sup>6</sup> symphonia discors,  
Et <sup>8</sup> crassum unguentum, et <sup>7</sup> Sardo cum melle pa-  
paver  
Offendunt, poterat duci quia <sup>10</sup> cœna sine illis ;

Inform'd, <sup>1</sup> and native wit no less,  
That title rightfully possess ;  
To whom reflection could impart  
A deeper knowledge of our art ;  
You to its votaries can well 695  
Its difference from all others tell.  
<sup>2</sup> The inns of court contain a host,  
Who never will attainments boast,  
That give to noisy fame pretence,  
Scott's <sup>3</sup> law, or Erskine's <sup>4</sup> eloquence ; 700  
And yet successfully may strive  
For honour, and with justice thrive ;  
But it will ne'er be found that rhymes,  
In present, past, or future times,  
<sup>5</sup> The reading tribe of all degrees 705  
With mediocrity could please.  
<sup>6</sup> As a bad fiddle, drum, and pipe,  
<sup>7</sup> Or China oranges too ripe,  
<sup>8</sup> Or flowers half-wither'd stuck around,  
<sup>9</sup> If at an annual dinner found, 710  
Disgust with their appearance more  
The guests assembled, as before,  
With what <sup>10</sup> the tavern else supplied,  
Hunger and thirst were satisfied :

Sic animis natum inventumque poema juvandis,  
Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum.

<sup>1</sup> Ludere qui nescit, <sup>2</sup> campestribus abstinet armis,  
Indoctusque <sup>3</sup> pilæ, <sup>4</sup> discique, <sup>5</sup> trochive, quiescit;  
<sup>6</sup> Ne spissæ risum tollant impune coronæ;

Qui nescit versus, tamen audet fingere. Quid nî?  
Liber et ingenuus; præsertim census equestrem  
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.

Tu nihil invitâ dices faciesque Minervâ:  
Id tibi iudicium, ea mens: si quid tamen olim

So poetry, the mind's dessert, 715

The nerves of sober sense will hurt,

As useless vanity, and seem

To many foolish in the extreme,

Unless the verse's vivid flow,

And thoughts, superior spirit show. 720

<sup>1</sup> The man who badly rides or drives,

<sup>2</sup> Hyde Park beholds not ; nor, at <sup>3</sup> fives,

<sup>4</sup> Billiards, or <sup>5</sup> tennis, inept,

Will any blundering art exert,

Lest from the crowd a laugh they get 725

<sup>6</sup> For a grave calculating bet.

But even he who least is skill'd

Aspires " the lofty rhyme to build."

" Yet what forbids? 'tis one, be sure,

Who gives not reason, like the poor, 730

To think that interest is his plan ;

And a most amiable man."

But you I warn (and poor or rich

Attend to me, I care not which)

Never to court the tuneful task 735

That faculties you want may ask.

Still lest, though fearful to mistake

Your powers, too much you undertake

¹ Scripseris, in ³ Metii descēdat ² judicis aures,  
Et patris et nostras ; nonumque prematur in annum.  
Membranis intus positis, delere licebit

⁴ Quod non edideris ; nescit vox missa reverti.

Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum  
Cædibus et victu fædo deterruit Orpheus,  
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres, rabidosque leones.  
Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis  
Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blandâ  
Ducere quo vellet. Fuit hæc sapientia quondam  
Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis ;



' Shewing your manuscript, consult  
Friends highly valued, and exult 740  
If any prove a <sup>2</sup> judge like <sup>3</sup> Hurd.  
But be the final act deferr'd  
Of publication, and the work  
Nine years within your closet lurk.  
Till to the circulating + press 745  
'Tis trusted from its safe recess,  
Each thought is at command ; but then  
Not one may be improved again.

The lyre that Orpheus struck, who bore  
A sacred character of yore, 750  
Reclaim'd the forest's tenants rude  
From violence, and horrid food.  
Hence of its power the tiger fell,  
And lion dread to soothe they tell.  
The stones too, at Amphion's call, 755  
'Tis said, to form the Theban wall,  
Hasten'd, by each enchanting note  
Attracted, as the chords he smote.  
But moral duties then supplied 760  
The poet's theme ; and these he tried  
To inculcate, as to all he shew'd  
What they or to each other owed,

Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;  
Oppida moliri; legis incidere ligno.

<sup>1</sup> Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque  
Carminibus venit. Post hos insignis Homerus

<sup>2</sup> Tyrtæusque mares animos in Martia bella

Versibus exacuit. Dictæ per carmina sortes,

Et vitæ monstrata via est; et gratia regum

Pieriis tentata modis, ludusque repertus,

Et longorum operum finis; NE FORTE PUDORI

SIT TIBI MUSA LYRÆ SOLERS, ET CANTOR

APOLLO.

Naturâ fieret laudabile carmen, an arte

Quæsitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite vena,

The state, or honour'd powers above ;  
Or to restrain promiscuous Love :  
Bind loose Desire with nuptial ties ; 765  
Frame wholesome laws ; bid cities rise.  
\* Antiquity used hence to assign  
The bard a character divine.  
Inspiring love of martial fame,  
Homer to these (a mighty name !) 770  
Succeeded ; and Tyrtæus,<sup>2</sup> he  
Who to preserve a nation free,  
His animating shell awoke.  
Famed oracles in numbers spoke.  
In modern, as in ancient time, 775  
Has wisdom taught, in verse sublime ;  
And kings, surrounded by a throng  
Of poets, boasted in their song  
Present alike and future praise ;  
While, in the studious shade, their lays 780  
The cares of life could sweetly hush—  
THUS NEED YOUR CALLING RAISE NO BLUSH.  
Whether 'tis art or nature, most  
That earns the honour poems boast,  
Is doubted ; yet are both required 785  
So much, nor study uninspired

Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium : alterius sic  
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicè.

<sup>1</sup> Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,  
Multa tulit fecitque puer ; sudavit et alsit ;

<sup>2</sup> Abstinuit Venere et vino. <sup>3</sup> Qui <sup>4</sup> Pythia cantat,  
Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum.

Nunc satis est dixisse, ego mira poemata pango :  
Occupet extremum scabies : mihi turpe relinqui  
est,

Et, quod non didici, sane nescire fateri.

<sup>5</sup> Ut præco ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas ;  
Assentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poeta

By favouring sense, nor genius rude,  
To excel, can we enough conclude.  
' The hind who wins the race, ne'er strung  
His sinews in the shop, when young, 790  
Of a man-milliner ; <sup>2</sup> and less  
Indulges, hopeful of success,  
At fairs with nimble gait to shine,  
In joys of women and of wine.  
<sup>3</sup> The piper dreads, ere aught he knows, 795  
A military master's blows,  
Our ears, while yet the morning's dark,  
Long <sup>4</sup> grating in St. James's Park.  
But 'tis enough for every dunce  
To cry out flippantly at once,— 800  
“ I write rare poems ; in this race  
Deuce take the hindmost. Sure disgrace  
Would follow if, howe'er untrain'd,  
From such a labour I refrain'd,  
And ignorance, by word or look, 805  
Shew'd of the task I undertook.”  
<sup>5</sup> As auctioneers persuasive stand,  
The hammer waving in their hand ;  
So oft the wealthy poet draws  
From rival flatterers applause, 810



Dives <sup>1</sup> agris, dives <sup>2</sup> positis in fœnore nummis.

Si vero est, unctum qui rectè ponere possit,

Et spondere levi pro paupere, et eripere arctis

Litibus implicitum ; mirabor, si sciet inter-

Noscere mendacem verumque beatus amicum.

Tu seu donaris, seu quid donare voles cui ;

Nolito ad versus tibi factós ducere plenum

Lætitiæ ; clamabit enim, pulchrè, benè, rectè !

Pallescet ; super his etiam stillabit amicis

Ex oculis rorem ; saliet ; tundet pede terram.

<sup>3</sup> Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt

Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo : sic

Derisor vero plus laudatore movetur.

Reges dicuntur multis urgere cululis,

With hopes,<sup>1</sup> the rent of an estate,

<sup>2</sup>And money in the funds, create.

If one, of equal kindness sure,

Keep open house ; or bail the poor,

And debtors he distress'd may see

815

From officers of justice free ;

'Twere a true miracle to find

In him a clear unbiass'd mind.

The friend, who reads your work, no gift

Should to a pitch of rapture lift ;

820

Lest, urged by prudence to repay

Such obligations, he should say,

Whate'er its merit, " bravo ! well ;"

<sup>4</sup>His wonder sudden paleness tell,

Or, tears soon starting from his eyes,

825

His gestures imitate surprise.

<sup>3</sup>As those who howl till out of breath,

In Ireland, to lament some death,

Still are afflicted less than one

Who, silently, then weeps a son ;

830

Even so less noisy will appear

The approbation that's sincere.

Princes successfully enough

Have tried, with bumpers, of what stuff

Et torquere mero quem perspexisse laborent  
An sit amicitiae dignus. Si carmina condes,  
Nunquam te fallant animi sub vulpe latentes.  
<sup>1</sup> Quintilio si quid recitares ; <sup>2</sup> corrige sodes  
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. Melius te posse negares,  
Bis terque expertum frustra ? <sup>3</sup> Delere jubebat,  
Et male tornatos incudi reddere versus.  
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere mallets :  
<sup>4</sup> Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam insumebat in-  
nem,  
Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.  
Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertes ;  
Culpabit duros ; incomptis allinet atrum  
Transverso calamo signum ; ambitiosa recidet  
Ornamenta ; parum claris lucem dare coget ;  
Arguet ambiguè dictum ; mutanda notabit ;

Each friend was made, 'twas their desire 835  
To sound, and know the man entire.  
So a friend's mind should you divine,  
As spoke with all the truth of wine ;  
Nor fear while he his breast unlocks,  
The falsehood of the lurking fox. 840  
<sup>1</sup> Sooner the roughness would I choose  
Of growling Johnson to the Muse ;  
Who, a new play did you refer  
To him, for an opinion, " Sir,  
<sup>2</sup> You the production," might return, 845  
" Would well correct, <sup>3</sup> but better burn."  
Perhaps it were not ill to say  
The same thing in a <sup>4</sup> softer way.  
But sure the friend that's good and wise  
Some passages will criticize ; 850  
Will point the line which he esteems  
Too feeble ; what too rugged seems ;  
On what to finish was bestow'd  
Scarce time ; where ornaments o'erload ;  
Or clearness an expression needs ; 855  
Or an ambiguous sense misleads :  
Some alteration, suiting best  
The nature of the work, suggest :

<sup>1</sup> Fiet Aristarchus ; non dicet, cur ego amicum  
Offendam in nugis ? <sup>2</sup> Hæ nugæ seria ducent  
In mala derisum semel, exceptumque sinistrè.  
<sup>3</sup> Ut mala quem scabies, aut <sup>4</sup> morbus regius urget,  
Aut fanaticus <sup>5</sup> error, et <sup>7</sup> iracunda <sup>6</sup> Diana ;  
Vesanum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poetam,  
Qui sapiunt : agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.  
Hic dum sublimes versus ructatur, et errat,  
Si veluti <sup>8</sup> merulis intentus decedit auceps  
In puteum, foveamque ; licet, succurrite, longum  
Clamet, io cives : non sit qui tollere curet.



’ Nor less than Walsh, in modern days,  
Merit his poet’s deathless praise. 860  
He will not say, “ ’tis wrong a friend  
In trifles such as this to offend ;”  
\* For scribblers the satiric pen  
Mourn’d lately, and will mourn again.  
Like one, for <sup>3</sup> northern itch immured, 865  
Or <sup>4</sup> evil, in the south erst cured,  
Or madness, whose rude fits dispose,  
Like <sup>5</sup> errant <sup>6</sup> Quixotte’s <sup>7</sup> rage, to blows ;  
All keep the fashion, unenjoy’d,  
The mad bard’s company to avoid. 870  
The boys alone, whene’er they meet,  
Hoot him, or follow down the street.  
He, readier to repeat with grace  
His rhymes, than right his feet to place,  
While, as one \* hawking, he pursues 875  
With upward eyes his flying Muse,  
Will seem of life not over fond,  
First, if he stray into a pond.  
But if he then cry “ help!” and show  
No loaded pockets keep him low, 880  
Relieved, I joking, should protest  
The man was certainly possess’d :

Si curet quis opem ferre, et demittere funem ;  
Qui scis, an prudens huc se projecerit, atque  
Servari noluit ? Dicam ; Siculique poetæ  
Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi  
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Ætnam  
Insiluit. <sup>1</sup> Sit jus liceatque perire <sup>2</sup> poetis.  
Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.  
<sup>3</sup> Nec semel hoc fecit, nec si retractus erit jam,  
Fiet homo, et ponet famosæ mortis amorem.  
Nec satis apparet, cur versus factitet ; utrum  
Minxerit in <sup>4</sup> patrios cineres, <sup>5</sup> an triste bidental  
Moverit incestus : certe furit, et <sup>6</sup> velut ursus  
Objectos caveæ valuit si frangere clathros,  
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.  
Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,  
Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris hirudo.

And then to those around relate  
The old Sicilian poet's fate.

"It was Empedocles's whim," 885

Too chilly in the stream to swim,  
A lava bath's effect to prove,  
And plunge in Etna's gulf, to move  
Wonder, as one of heavenly birth,  
Unmark'd retiring from the earth. 890

<sup>1</sup> Were we not Christians, truly I  
Should counsel you to let him die ;

<sup>2</sup> And the bard's privilege assume  
Enjoy'd in suicidal Rome.

<sup>3</sup> But we must watch in future still, 895  
Nor henceforth let him have his will.

For whose rare crime must he atone,  
Poor wretch ! <sup>4</sup> "his parents' or <sup>5</sup> his own ?"

<sup>6</sup> As late all fear'd the tiger's rage,  
Seen stalking distant from his cage ; 900

So, learned or unlearned, all  
He chases ; while the thoughts appal  
Of what may happen—to be read,  
By his oppressive rhymes, half-dead :  
Which fate he would ensure to each, 905  
Close and exhausting, as a leech.

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## NOTES.

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VERSE 1.—Mr. Fuseli's style, of which he has given such good examples, furnishes the opening with a parallel, which it would otherwise want.

Ver. 32.—The ingenious authoress to whose romances I allude, has so happy a talent for descriptions of this sort, that one may be fearful lest a similar remark, made by critics of reputation, should deter her from exerting it, as she has been induced, whether from the same cause or no, to exclude every thing poetical from her last work. But if introduced with art, and not too frequently, such poetry as hers would not fail to be acceptable.

What seems more objectionable, is the style of writing she has adopted, in imitation of the late Lord Orford, who has admitted into the romance, a species of composition of a tragic cast, that un-



restrained delineation of character which is only proper in comedy, and in the novel. As I know the character of Piero, when it occurs in the very catastrophe, has displeased other people besides myself, I shall venture to quote from my work called "Letters on the Drama," and part of the letter there on Tragi-comedy; and I will ask, whether it does not seem prophetic of the character here alluded to. My words are these:

"Though such interlocutors as are here recommended may, in this original example, have produced a good effect, as well as in any later work, in imitation of it, yet one may possibly foresee that their blunders will not furnish inexhaustible means of giving dignity to a work, nor tend very powerfully to enliven it."

Here, I think, I made a very great concession in favour of *these parts* of the original work, and of the imitations, which were those of this lady; but I cannot be biassed, even by my friendship for Piero, to think his presence *always* indispensable. Her original mode of striking by the terrors of superstition, even in teaching its absurdity, and of course remarkably adhering to poetical, or rather

fictional probability, is, I think, a real addition to literature.

Ver. 38.—The cypress of the original is less characteristic of English art than the oak.

Ver. 45.—It is to be hoped that these opposite rocks and shoals of composition may be so well pointed out after repeated soundings in future charts, that no literary landman, who talks of what he does not understand, may have an excuse for considering as a matter of opinion, or dissembling, as suits himself, either the merit or demerit of subsequent navigators.

Ver. 61.—I have not *supposed*, with Bishop Hurd, that this passage in the original *only* related to minute and tasteless workmanship, because it will otherwise unite with the whole preceding part, and because a sculptor knows that the hair of a statue is capable of discovering fancy in the artist. Horace, thus understood, speaks of attention confined to parts, from deficiency either of genius or judgment.

The French have seemed to wish tailors (though subdivisions of men) to partake of the ethereal fire of painters. Quære, might not hair dressers friz

and turn, though not shave, classically, according to the dignifying principles of the sculptor? Let me, however, not be thought an enemy to regulating *soberly* our changes of fashion by the rules of taste.

Ver. 67.—It appears to me from this whole part, that the above may be an interpretation justified by the text. We may suppose an English sculptor *included* who has not regularly gone through his studies at Rome. So some of our painters have, from a like cause, been observed to shrink from the task of drawing the naked, and though difficult, esteemed it less so to cover their figures with drapery.

Ver. 78.—Pope and Gray particularly excel in adherence to this rule; as in their poems what is good is almost all. There seems to me no poem of any consequence by the former, that shows so little judgment in the general idea, and the execution, as the ode on St. Cecilia's day. There may be a good stanza or two, but the series of thoughts is not *lecta potenter*; and though the first stanza may minutely describe a concert, yet I doubt whether such airy images are palpable enough for poetry. At least, I recollect no great

poet who has pleased us by a long and discriminative description of mere music.

Ver. 87.—At a time when novelty and false originality is so much admired, perhaps the beginning of the part that follows, may be more serviceable as a rule, than the conclusion. This whole subject is peculiarly well treated by the Bishop of Worcester.

Ver. 139.—I approve, however, much more of experiment than surmise. If any one prefers rhyme in writing an epic poem, let the attempt be made; and our posterity will decide as much better than we can at present, as we have decided upon the verse and prose of dramatic composition better than our ancestors in the time of Dryden. If the measure be disapproved, the poem, if good, will nevertheless be read, and it will show to future historians and philosophers, the present state of opinion on one point of criticism. But I own, I think favourably of a late recommendation of blank verse for long, and rhyme for short poems. The expression of *minor poets* seems to mark a natural division of poets into two sorts, which corresponds with this idea.

It appears to me that there is some degree of respect due to the notion of a particular measure being fit for a particular composition ; and for the sound being an echo to the sense, Dr. Johnson attempted to show the absurdity of the supposition by adducing in proof of it (see Life of Pope, pages 120 and 121) some Alexandrines intended to express opposite sentiments. But is it not by that *effect* which opposite ideas are capable of producing, that we have felt ourselves affected in a different manner with the same verse ? These different sentiments unite in being *remarkable*, and therefore may both in some measure agree with any verse which is *remarkable*. Opposite sentiments, too, may have some common property besides effect (such as animation) and this is perhaps the reason why the same measure may be suitable to both ; for I think that sounds, however little *solely* and formally to be relied upon, may concur with the art of the poet to enforce sentiments analogous to their supposed nature ; and therefore one measure may, by its original structure, be preferable to another. Now the couplet of lines of eight syllables, and those of seven syllables, have both pleased when



used in these different manners, and even when they have been used together in the same poem. The first of these has been adopted by Gray in an epitaph, and is capable of expressing solemn poetry; though on the other hand it is very commonly, and I think well, used for the familiar epistle, in which a grave sentiment will sometimes be natural. For if the subject of the whole is grave, it ought to be an elegy, and if enthusiastic, an ode; and such subjects being excepted, may make a difference in the case. This familiarity of tone is discernible too in the more *familiar* heroic comical poem. The measure of Hudibras is nearly this; only with ludicrous rhymes making it still more happily characteristic. That of the Rape of the Lock is suited to the *solemnity of grace*. The second is to be seen both in the translations of the terrible Runic poetry, and in the Anacreontic ode. For this latter I think it the most proper, because the irregularity of the mixture of these verses has been made by Gray happily expressive of the character of wild barbarous poetry. Milton's Allegro and Penseroso sufficiently instance an opposite use of the same sort of verse. Because in these poems,

which may be considered as odes to Mirth and Melancholy, if not a new kind of composition, Milton has used a descriptive style ; Dyer, in a valuable poem, has however innovated, and chosen to reject the more solemn-paced verse of Pope and Denham, which seems much better calculated to describe the bold Brecknock hills and woods. I must again, however, explain myself to mean, that a composition, such, for instance, as an ode or sonnet, should not *forfeit the character peculiar to it*, for too great irregularity of metre, or deficiency in the number of rhymes.

As the same verse has been thought adapted to different sorts of composition, so the same sort of composition has been esteemed fit for different kinds of verse, even where there is not a necessary variety of them, as in the ode. Both local and didactic poetry have, without manifest impropriety at least, been exhibited as well in blank verse, as rhyme. It seems as if in poems of a middle length, which form the boundaries between blank verse and rhyme, something of both ought to be perceived ; and as either sort is more descriptive, and less moral or argumentative, it is more fit than

another for blank verse, and less for rhyme. Thus English poetry, which is furnished with measures somewhat in proportion to the various kinds of poetry in existence, falls easily into beautiful order, and forms a natural system which can alone be improved by the patience and caution of true taste, observant only as hints of the suggestions of individuals. In ancient sculpture, where such excellence was attained, it is well known how systematically, and according to what a regular discrimination of character, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, the artist used to proceed. But this nice arrangement in poetry, which I should recommend thus for its own sake, even if composition did not derive force from it, I should wish not only because attention to reason in art argued a desirable progress in it, and a higher degree of civilization; but because, by the help and guidance of method, it ENCOURAGED IN EVERY SORT OF POETRY THE PRODUCTION OF MORE APPROPRIATE BEAUTIES. After some time, perhaps, habit would give a charm to a particular measure of which it was not originally possessed. Mr. Pye has thrown great light upon the inadequacy of metre always to ASSIST;

and I am led in consequence, to recommend giving it, in this manner, the additional importance of another object, namely, to DISTINGUISH.

There is a natural division of the objects of our consideration into sacred and profane, which justifies our equal respect of the Gothic and Grecian styles of architecture; but at the same time it is necessary to keep them distinct. By a kind of fiction, perhaps, a mansion may with propriety be built in the former style; but were this custom to become general, it would lose that sanctity of character which it has at present. A palace, or a seat of learning, is with great propriety built in the grandest style of Grecian architecture; and as these, either by the laws of the country or endowments of colleges, may be connected with religion, there may be a reason why they should often appear in a Gothic form. Thus in this art also, we see a point in which the different styles are found to meet.

There is a prejudice, however, against the Gothic style, though allowed the most picturesque; and as the beauty of the objects it furnishes cannot be denied, they have been considered as striking

chiefly as ruins, or by antiquity. We are therefore discouraged from producing new examples of it, and more particularly from multiplying its finest examples, which must be always churches of the largest size; whose numerous small parts (though consistent with general unity) and the unapparent laws of whose structure, are analogous to the mysterious objects of religious thought; whose tall clustering columns form channels for the ascending voice of praise; and whose tapering peaked summits appear to point to heaven.

The French, I believe, have classical prejudices against this style, when they may see reason to entertain classical prejudices in favour of it. If Grecian architecture was born at the birth of learning, the pure Gothic was born at its revival; and if we derive more pleasure from Grecian literature by associating the idea of it with other Grecian arts, we shall derive less from Dante and Petrarch (of whose residence they are so proud) unless we borrow similar assistance from the monuments of that poetical superstition which charms us in the history and fate of Eloisa and Abelard. This taste, therefore, must improve our relish for



literature, as well as the other. Without it there would be a material deduction from the pleasures of the imagination, and confinement to the association of ideas; and with it, in addition, there is nothing left to desire. Mr. James Wyatt thinks this architecture was in its purest state in the reign of Edward the Third, who seems the English Lewis the Fourteenth, both from living at a learned period, and being actuated by the spirit of conquest. But may not this architecture denote aversion to this very spirit of conquest, by calling to mind those times when independent states were forming, and national liberty gradually establishing, after the destruction of the power of ancient Rome? Our senates might be built in every country of Gothic architecture, in order to commemorate the grand delivery of the world from subjection to the only power, which has dared accomplish designs of universal influence and dominion. The present state of the world has been preferred to the former, under Rome, by one of the most democratic writers, the American Barlow, who in this shews himself more consistent than Paine, in whose pamphlet it is proposed, agreeable to the ambitious plans o

Lewis the Fourteenth, that Paris should become the metropolis of the world ; though democracy is now made the means of universal dominion.

Ver. 141—Neither Horace nor Boileau have attempted to found composition upon reason ; but every species of it must surely be capable of being so founded. Thus epic poetry arises from our disposition to relate, and hear related, the actions of men ; the drama, from the power we have discovered of exhibiting them by simple imitation ; pastoral poetry, from that of giving, by both these means, a picture of rural simplicity ; the ode and elegy, from an inclination to express fully our sentiments, and to indulge our fancy upon a particular occasion. In doing this, we adopt, according to our subject, either a contemplative style, as in the elegy ; or a brisk and animated one, as in the ode. This liveliness again, is of two sorts, for either it is produced by admiration, and is much employed in panegyric, as in the greater ode : or it is produced by joy, and is employed in celebrating more sportively, as in the lesser ode. For I think there have been odes on subjects only suited for elegy ; and subjects of elegies which ought only to have been

treated in odes. Whether these two species would not include most sorts of short poems, not very short, except pastoral, descriptive, and satiric, and therefore Sulpicia have been properly praised in elegy, I cannot say. It may be determined, too, in future, whether the sonnet might not exceed the bounds of elegy, and extend to every thing poetical *in a single thought*; forming thus a contrast with epigram, which might confine itself to point and wit. Mr. Thomas Warton's sonnets have this character. The reader and writer will better understand each other, when such a separation of styles has, by any means been completed.

I will add one word more upon the subject of architecture, before I take leave of it; and observe, that much less remains to render it as universally rational in every part, as all the other fine arts, than I once thought. Utility on the one hand, and variety, proportion, and propriety, on the other, appear to me the governing principles of this art. According to the first, the proper degree of strength will be given to the different props of the building; according to the second, those props will be so distributed, that we shall be attracted by diversity of objects and appearances; ac-

according to the third and fourth, those objects and appearances will be divested of every thing disagreeable to the eye. From our knowledge, though not precise, of proportion, we are enabled to form a judgment sufficiently accurate, of a room or a column. I think Lord Kaimes too theoretically mentions three sorts of columns as founded in nature, though we ought to keep within the extreme bounds of the three sorts, in respect to proportion; perhaps because they will want importance, if smaller, and distinctness and compactness, if larger. Our idea of a summit and base, and of the character of *junction*, together with the ornament of mouldings, may account for the rest of the column, and the architrave. But what natural reason is there that we should adhere so exactly to the capitals of the ancients?

An unsuccessful attempt has been made lately to produce a new order. The theory which makes pillars derive their origin from trees, has suggested a plan of producing a resemblance of trees to support a portico. The architect appears in this to have mistaken the nature and character of his art. However true Vitruvius's account of its origin, the present character of architecture is *regularity*; while that of landscape,



which it is improperly made to imitate, is *irregularity*. Nature merely suggests to the former, as well as to the various arts that furnish houses, an idea of those forms which are most familiar to us, in order to be rendered decidedly subordinate to them. The landscape painter's art, indeed, is just as irregular in its character as nature ; but a pillar, such as I have been speaking of, is a baseless fabric, and the result of reasoning from doubtful principles.

If, therefore, we can account for the beauty of other parts of architecture with ease, but cannot for that of a Corinthian or Ionic capital ; nor say why, at least, some small variation should not take place ; how shall we keep quite clear of the imputation of servility in our imitation of the Greeks and Romans ? To this I answer, that it is a case similar to that of the British constitution. Alteration can only be wished for in the slightest degree ; and indeed for great and distant effects we may admire upon general principles alone. It is better to acquiesce in existing customs, than produce monstrosity ; if, at the same time, we do justice to philosophy, by merely *supposing variable* the present state of things, and make general, possible, and voluntary improvement our secret, and unaffected



aim. Yet though a sort of *manner* will probably remain, and may even be serviceable to check caprice, provided it is understood as variable, and made to accord with new conceptions of beauty ; it is worthy of rational creatures to imitate the excellencies, rather than the peculiarities, as such, of the ancients. If, however, this improvement can gradually and imperceptibly be made, it should be undertaken only by an architect of the rare taste of Mr. James Wyatt.

Ver. 149.—The pointed emphasis of this verse accords well with it ; and it seems a general receptacle for all poetry which has not a different measure particularly assigned to it. The *Eloisa* may cause a doubt whether all those shorter poems of a superior sort, and marked with fancy, sublimity, and pathos, can be written in the measures of the English ode and elegy : but I am by no means sure of the contrary ; and probably not only the soothing tenderness of Tibullus, and the sublime solemnity of Gray, can be expressed in the elegiac stanza, but also the abrupt empassioned style that characterizes parts of this poem. The measure of elegy being adapted to lamentation, perhaps that of Milton's *Lycidas* might be proper for monody, rather considered as pastoral,

than as elegiac; and we might use it in future in the pastoral. The irregularity both of its rhymes and verses may be suited to artless sentiment. I have mentioned in another place my being clear of the propriety of translating Italian poets in their own stanza or verse; might not advantage also be taken of this custom, and their stanza, or that of Spenser, be adopted in allegorical poems of an old Italian or Provençal cast? The association of ideas may perhaps direct to the choice of metre in other instances, but in all we ought to be perfectly satisfied that a measure is unobjectionable.

Ver. 155—I must own I approve of the Bishop of Worcester's observation of ACTION being the object of Tragedy, and MANNERS of Comedy. It is not but that manners are sometimes more difficult to paint in tragedy than comedy, and discover the greatest talents, their fitness for it indeed being acknowledged. I did not, on the other hand, recollect any similar observation, when, in my notes to Calsabigi's Essay, I remarked that comedy had its revenge by the power of admitting an equal proportion of action, without making it its object. Manners may be considered in three lights: and,

First, when they appear alone, and constitute the essence of comedy. Action may then be compared to the animal spirits, which, however great, do not the more, therefore, tend to interrupt the attention, but rather fix it, inclining to preserve, and to continue, the same tone of mind. For either the pleasure derived from cheerful society is the result, or another social pleasure arises from the gratification of curiosity in a sentimental mode, in observing the passions and distresses of certain characters in general society. In both cases the objects of attention are superficial, and our eye remains still fixed upon *manners*, though by means of a more rapid and enlivening succession of ideas. A *display* of manners is here the object.

Secondly, they may appear subordinate, and assistant to action. Mr. Pye instances this by a happy and just metaphor, comparing them to the colouring of a picture. Colouring is one of the most difficult parts of painting; and a picture of Titian approaches in value to one of Raphael. I shall pursue my own metaphor in order fully to explain myself. We will suppose this vivacity and animation which I have been describing, and compare to action, where the possessor is afflicted by accumulated misfortune extending

to all around him, and expresses his feelings consequently in a manner proportionate to his sensibility. Here we have no longer leisure to gratify sympathetic curiosity by his distress, but our mind ceases to dwell on the objects before us; we are absorbed in reflection on his fate, and overwhelmed with pity. This effect is produced by the same rapid and striking succession of ideas, as the former, though opposite. The only difference is, that the same vivacity, resembling dramatic *action*, here calls the attention to itself, instead of assisting it to dwell amusively on indifferent appearances, as *manners*. We may here see the impropriety of that sort of French play called *drame*, which will neither exhibit the most striking circumstances in human events, nor take care to render distress interesting by forcible delineation of manners; and yet expect from us application sufficient to attend to it. Sometimes a comedy attempts gaiety, and yet equally, and with equal impropriety, fixes the attention upon action. Addison's *Drummer* is an instance of this, in which, certainly, the scenes have the elegant language of a periodical paper; and parts of the plot, especially its conclusion, discover sensible composition, but which has a coldness that prevents our wonder at its being

neglected. Dr. Johnson's remark of a comedy's having the operation of a tragedy, would be applied to this with peculiar happiness. It is precisely its character, for it is the ultimate event, and not the means by which it is brought about, that seems to interest us. It surely is not the *mighty good joke* of frightening the domestics with a drum that can be supposed to have any thing in it comic. We ought, in comedy, to think less of what is done, than who does it; and the more astonishing the incidents, the less comic. What humour there is, smells too much of the stables and the root-house; Terence's plays eclipse it even in this respect, but vastly more in that taste which takes care that comic action, whatever its *quantity*, should be of such an airy, invisible *quality*, as to permit nothing to attract but manners. A *truth* of manners, therefore, is the object; but as such, a *display* of them is often necessary.

I proceed, thirdly, to mention manners as related to time and place. In this view the *νηεα* must have been considered by Ulysses, as furnishing a comparison between foreign countries and his own. This historical sort of effect is favourable to poetical elevation, and



those works where it is required, by the ornament of particular *costumi*. It assists epic poetry, as it does tragedy ; resembling the effect of a fancy-dress, which takes away all quaintness in future times from a portrait. It is not so serviceable to comedy, as it gives it the awkwardness of an old fashion. However, the painter's hand may always please. It appears a sort of film and incrustation that either impedes or incumbers the display of manners, so much the more, as the times to which they belong are distant. Cibber's works have little of it yet ; Congreve's and Wycherley's something more ; and Jonson's a great deal more. Yet Terence, and even Aristophanes, give that peculiar pleasure which results from comedy. However, Hume's criticism was that of a true historian when, in describing the advantage of a comedy over a philosophical system, in point of durable fame, he represents it as aiming to *paint the manners of the age*. Its proper object is to exhibit a representation of general society. Considered as painting the manners of a former age or distant country, it, in some degree at least, distracts the attention ; though it may still retain such an advantage over a philosophical system.

Pastoral poetry is in a kind of middle situation between these compositions. Its object is to charm us with whatever is pleasing, or can be imagined so, in country life. Rural manners, therefore, are the principal means of this, the display of which ought not to be hindered by any such principle as I have been speaking of. Asiatic or American eclogues would of course, as pastoral poems, be incumbered with imagery, which must be remarkably assistant to epic poetry, such as that of Camoëns, or D'Ercilla; but would obtrude local ideas upon the pastoral poet, ill calculated to give a striking picture of rural life. On the other hand, the manners that would be described not being intended, like those in comedy, to strike simply by the force of truth, but something admirable and engaging in addition, any customs that can coalesce with such manners, and assist their character, would form an exception to the general rule. The ancient mythology, if it can be made consistent with probability, must have this effect. Claude and Poussin add character to their landscapes when the figures are shepherds; but where the Eastern *costumi* are introduced in a fancy-piece, it must either take from the

effect, or not give any except what is owing to the painter's skill, and accidental circumstances. Orientalism, in a picture, would be seen in perfection where fancy was out of the case, as in the views of Daniel and Hodges; or where it was blended with truth, as in a history piece, representing some battle or embassy in India.

The pastorals of Virgil and Theocritus suggest two things as desirable to their imitators. One is, to describe the country round as they see it, and its inhabitants; and the other to recommend their fictions by resorting for images and ideas to the beautiful heathen mythology. These two objects Pope and (a greater pastoral poet) Milton, found difficult to unite; and it seems impossible for a modern to do so in a single species of rural eclogue. I would therefore propose, that there should be two sorts: one of them might exhibit a classical landscape, the scene Arcadia, in which nothing heterogeneous should appear, as in Sir Philip Sydney's work so called, but in which the shepherds should speak and act according to the supposed character of Arcadians. Here, indeed, might the gods of Greece and Rome appear with probability in our

poetry ; which they would, by only putting all allusions to them in the mouths of the characters. The other sort might be in the style of Gainsborough, and exhibit a domestic scene supposed at the present time. The names in both ought to be the same, as usual in pastorals ; in one, as being Greek names, and suited to the country ; and in the other, as shadowing under them modern rustics, whom it would be impossible to mention otherwise consistently with good taste. The passion too, of love, I think, would best be described plaintively in the former. Several idylliums of Theocritus are upon subjects proper for the latter.

Ver. 157.—I will not dispute our having exhibited lyric flights equal or superior to the ancients ; but I think if it is indispensable to study them in any line, it is in this. The narrative style, which is so much used by Pindar, is seldom, if ever, to be found in any other lyric ; and yet the expectation it raises is proved by him fit to render more forcible those transitions that characterize the art. The dramatic style, which is more usual with Horace, we have good instances to boast of. It has often struck me, that the ode partakes of the nature of conversation. Those who insist upon methodical arrangement in the

former, would probably ridicule any thing like formal regularity in the latter; and even allow less of it than ought always to be in the ode. If a person at table with a party were, by lively sallies and pointed remarks, to interrupt the thread of the story he was relating to the company, they would not object to his digressions, if they were digressions marked with propriety; and it would be allowed, that this *liveliness* was the character of conversation. I think, however, that Pindar does not always preserve the just bounds of the *tenui deducta poemata filo*, though one instance where he does is in that ode which I translated, and which at the same time has sublimity not unworthy of the poet, so well characterized by Pope in these lines:

Across the harp a *careless* hand he flings,  
And boldly sinks into the sounding strings.

A remarkable apparent freedom, yet consistent with good sense and finished composition, is necessary in the greater ode.

I attempted to introduce a small degree of the narrative style into the fourth song of the Battle of Edington, as not recollecting to have seen an instance



of it in any English ode. Of our lyric poems I think Dryden's ode rather to be preferred ; but I consider Gray of a more lyric genius, and Collins as the nearest in merit to them.

Ver. 163.—Aristotle only insinuates the propriety of keeping distinct the character of every sort of composition, as to metre, as well as other respects. But Horace here makes a duty of it, as far as his undoubted liberality to genius in every shape will permit. Besides the great advantage I have spoken of, by its encouraging the production of appropriate beauties, the reducing of poetry to principles will at once interest persons of every degree of natural taste in the cause of literature. The *goût de comparaison*, though it does not entitle any body to judge or condemn positively, yet being attainable by all minds, is capable perhaps of diffusing wider the enjoyments of literature than natural taste. It might likewise enlarge the sphere of every person's ideas in conversation, who would speak with just confidence upon any subject, when he did not start an opinion of his own, but only drew an inference from rules of composition which had been approved of. Such a system is always

much wanted, where the man who industriously cultivates poetry is looked upon by the man of superfluous business as useless to his country, and almost considered, in the manner Pope was by his sovereign, *as a fiddler*. But the division of *labour* ought impartially to be encouraged, for the improvement of our country, and the common benefit of all mankind.

Ver. 169.—In a gay and conversible company there is nothing either in manner or in phrase that particularly attracts the attention. Let us suppose two persons to retire from one, on account of business they are desirous of discoursing upon. They both immediately recall their thoughts from various indifferent subjects, and fix them upon one ; as a frequenter of the theatres, after seeing half a comedy at one house, sees half a tragedy at the other ; and having been employed in contemplating *manners*, goes where he, instead, can contemplate *action*. They use now a more emphatic manner, in order to understand that event which singly interests them ; and, if they are men of education, express themselves, to enforce their meaning, in an eloquent and scholarly way, above the pitch of common con-

versation. The regular emphasis they use, and the choice language in which they speak, seem to me the foundation of metre and poetical diction in tragedy.

The *ictus* of verse seems a sort of warning given by the poet, that he does not intend we should fix our minds upon inferior objects in the course of the representation, but wait for something striking that is finally to appear. Lillo will furnish an instance of this in his two plays of *George Barnwell* and the *Fatal Curiosity*; the former of which affects our feelings too strongly, by not parrying off our observation from manners. The alloy of metre tempers in a due degree the dolorous sentiments of the *Fatal Curiosity*. Pastoral poetry, it is true, aims at representing manners rather than action; but as it has a view beyond a simple representation of them, and wishes to create an enthusiastic admiration of the country, it is properly heightened by the melody of versification. As to any boast that can be made of the equal fitness of prose for comedy and tragedy, on account of being *natural*; it must immediately appear, whether an imitation is more exact, when the characters of our comic pieces, or when Cæsar and

Alexander express themselves in the daily language of the inhabitants of London. But the most convincing argument in favour of prose in comedy, is that the *material* there becomes the *object* of imitation; and therefore verse must of course appear unnatural and improbable.

Ver. 210.—As far as I have been able to judge of Schiller, from his three plays translated into English, he appears to me a bold, free, and natural painter of tragic manners; and that through a large portion of some of his works; but I recollect but one scene of which I acknowledged the striking pathos. He seems to be classed by some with Euripides, as entitled with him to the appellation of *most tragic*. I doubt, however, even if a person extracted from him, with the skill that Mrs. Montague has from Shakspeare, he would be able to prove it by example. May not the cursory reader be misled, partly by the horrible, or ineffectual terrible, and partly by what I here wished to remark, namely, a fault opposite to that of which Horace is speaking; a sort of lugubrious style, without an adequate cause of grief?

Ver. 215.—As in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Ver. 220.—The scene of tragedies is still laid in

general in the same two quarters of the world, but in all parts of them, instead of a few only.

Ver. 223.—It is natural to prefer the most important subjects; such as are either domestic, or equally interesting to us, by being the most interesting to the world at large; from a rare greatness in the human character; from events in the highest degree famous; or from the marked and repeated notice of literature and the fine arts. The exactness of the parallel does not consist in the resemblance of the characters compared, but in this circumstance, that the total range of the modern drama is carefully marked out in the imitation, as that of the ancient drama is in the original.

Ver. 237.—Lock's idea is, that the application of our labour to land gives us property in it. The sticklers, however, for novelty, at the expence of good taste, might wish by some chemical process to create soil; and if they could do it, be satisfied because it was new, though barren. The more true originality, certainly the better; but whether it may not, in a particular instance, be found connected with imitation, is best judged by persons of taste and feeling. It may be found in style, and compensate for the servility of



imitation in the thought, especially where a talent for versification is united with a choice of expression. Though Virgil's *laziness* has prevented all his thoughts from being remarked for invention, yet I infer from his style and other circumstances, that even in invention of incidents, he might deserve Quintilian's praise of being nearer the first than the third ancient epic. I could have wished the Bishop of Worcester had dwelt longer upon the exact degree of merit or demerit in the poets he quotes for their several imitations, which sometimes in point of expression might be regulated by the number of words imitated in a sentence. Homer's work helped to form the opinions of mankind after him, and adherence to those opinions shewed only Virgil's attention to probability. Expression and metre may discover originality, but are they not *thought*, as much as any thing else? Judgment may be discovered in the management of them, as well as sentiment. In short, it seems very desirable that writers should not attempt to seem ORIGINAL, only in order to become STRANGE.

Ver. 249.—The venerable Prelate above mentioned

happily illustrates these three rules, by the single example of Ben Jonson's Cataline.

Ver. 264.—Boileau has a case exactly similar to that in Horace furnished by the annals of French poetry: but in an original work he went almost out of his way for it; as I think we soon forget the bad effect, for instance, of the first line of Lucan. The opening of Addison's Cato has not, as I recollect, been criticized, though he tells us of

The great, the important day, &c.

Different, likewise, from the unequalled modesty observed by Colman in the exordium of Paradise Lost!

If this rule, however, be connected with what follows, it will not seem to be only meant in a literal sense, but still farther enforce his precept concerning *order* (see verse 81). With all this art Milton seems to have about made ample amends for weaker interest, by greater sublimity, than other poets.

Ver. 277.—This is a most essential rule, and Homer's peculiar merit was inventing it.

The account given by the great Metastasio, of his change of opinion on reading Tasso, may here

occur. He was brought up among those Italian literati who ranged themselves on the side of Ariosto, while the two poets had partizans so much opposed to each other. He says, however, he cannot describe the sensations he felt, when having deigned to look into Tasso, he first saw presented to his view, by genius equal to Ariosto's, a single action, as if in a picture, all the parts connected, and conspiring to produce a single effect, in the manner of Homer. Among the reasons he gives for preference of Tasso's artificial composition, is his *love of order*.

Ver. 284.—Gibbon, with a commendable caution in admitting principles, has started a doubt concerning the necessity of this rule. The objection came naturally from an historian, yet it well deserves the consideration of the critic, how far his arguments have weight. The *Odyssey* and *Æneid* seem to have an advantage over the *Henriade* in this, that the narrator in both is in a more interesting situation, as he speaks of a variety

of most disastrous chances,

Of moving accidents by flood and field;

Of hair-breadth scapes in the imminent deadly  
breach ;

—— Of antres vast, and desarts idle,

Rough quarries, rocks, and hills, whose heads  
touch heaven ;

And of the cannibals that each other eat,

The Anthropophagi, &c.

Also, in one case there was a female who thought

—— in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,

'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.

Whether Gibbon would shew himself too much of the historian in modifying this rule, I cannot say. He may perhaps too unwillingly allow of some adherence to it, as “ more varied and dramatic ;” for variety is the very essence of epic poetry. Great effects may surely be produced by it.

Ver. 285.—The principle of selection is often disapproved of by the declamatory encomiast of nature ; and yet I confess I see no medium between accusing Shakspeare of pedantry for the exercise of his judgment in composition, and acknowledging the existence of rules, though partially known, and often misun-

derstood, in every one of the fine arts. Because the artist or poet, in attempting to produce ideal beauty, transgresses the bounds of nature, why should the failure of human abilities, which are *proved* liable to err, be fancifully attributed to the system he had adopted? It teaches, too, a bad moral, and stands in the way of universal improvement, to which a contempt of perfect excellence is unfriendly. So much may safely be conceded, that system ought, in every instance, to be sacrificed to nature.

Ver. 296.—I do not see either the great advantage or disadvantage of the epilogue. It may deserve respect as a custom, which, were it to cease, would not deserve regret. The able critic need not, perhaps, waste his time in noticing it.

Ver. 325.—I have said a great deal already in former works upon the subject of *action*, which is capable of ensuring the satisfaction of an audience through the whole piece, without the assistance of the scene-painter. The drama ought to be considered (very differently from sculpture) as never having arrived at perfection among the Greeks. Nothing is more natural than that, having been deprived, in modern times, of the pageantry and



music which once supported it, it should have induced one of the nations where it was cultivated to resort to some sufficient means, such as change of scene, to produce variety; and that, its nature having been canvassed of late years upon the Continent, among literary men (in whose opinions, I think, that is discoverable) Calsabigi should have first found himself provided with a subject for a dramatic essay. The greatest genius was displayed even by the inventor of tragedy; but as it does not require the powers of Newton to make some small addition to our present stock of philosophical knowledge, so it may happen, that the Battle of Eddington has made that improvement to which the art naturally tended. Action and pathos are its two principles, and the deficiency in the operation of one ought to be made up by the other. A subject that has in it much pathos, though that is ever to be sought for, does not require, and would be injured by the greatest degree of action, extending to those parts where the passions were to be displayed. The enemies of *art* may be surprised to find the criticisms of the careless Dryden, in his essay, the most favourable to my opinions; as in

speaking of some of the works of Ben Jonson, he alone *gives an idea* of a play within all the rules, and yet producing variety, by the number of characters, and quantity of incidents. Upon this subject the Bishop of Worcester has a remark, which *seems* taking the other side of the question. In recommending the unity of action, in which the Greeks excelled the French, he observes, that even where that unity is preserved, a multitude of subordinate events would distract, just as if it were not so. The general observation is perfectly true ; but in what sort of particular instance could it be exemplified ? it would be so in the case I have supposed, of incidents being too numerous to allow of that pathos which the subject afforded. But an experiment was necessary to be made, in order to show the proportion of subordinate events a tragedy would bear ; and to prevent this rule from being misunderstood, to the prejudice of the art. In the Battle of Eddington, therefore, the time of the representation was, to use a mathematical metaphor, *applied* to the time of the action, and made to *coalesce* with it, in all its parts. When this was done, the task was single and simple, instead of double and

difficult. The eye assisted in the conduct of the story, and it would have appeared unnatural to introduce either more or fewer incidents. I think, by a similar animation to that produced by this principle, an improvement might take place also in narrative works of imagination ; and hints might be afforded, to keep a greater number of small compositions closely to the purpose.

There has lately appeared a comedy, which though it does not seem to aim at immortality, yet deserved the run it had last season, by adopting the method of increasing action ; I speak of the *Cure for the Heart-ache*. The action produced by a deep-laid plot, where the morality of the piece is unimpeachable, is not to be confounded with that arising from affectedly planned situations, and knowledge of the theatre ; but will perhaps generally deserve some encouragement, while it is yet rare.

I would recommend Bell's Theatre, for every dramatic collection both here and abroad. There is more philosophy in those inverted commas than appears at first sight ; and I wish, if possible, to trace the custom of curtailing to so great a man as Garrick.

Ver. 334.—The imitation explains the rule of the poet, agreeably to the improved practice of the English stage. Boileau's rule, exactly that of the imitation, is,

*Soyez vif et pressé dans vos narrations.*

But he did not know the full extent of his own rule. I had occasion carefully to attend to it in the fifth scene and second act of the *Battle of Eddington*, where the only description takes up no more than ten or eleven lines; that too was spoken in crossing the stage to the cottage. In general, it should be attempted to preserve, at the same time, the interests arising from the situation of the speaker, and matter of his speech. A dream, for instance, or any thing that impresses us strongly with an idea of its nature, even before its development, will bear to be related much more at length. This observation does not hold good only in the drama.

Ver. 335.—I am disposed to allow much of the praise the play of *Cato* has ever had. It has indeed instanced the progress of the dramatic art, by showing a degree of action never known in any other country, united with regularity, elegant lan-

guage, and noble maxims; to which last, and not to a spirit of party, I attribute its original success on the stage. I do not mean to cry it up as equal to the plays of Shakspeare, but only to say, that it is, on many accounts, valuable to literature, and is well worthy of Addison.

To poetry we may owe a proof, that such a character as Cato's cannot interest; and therefore, in spite of an empty praise easily converted into ridicule, it cannot often obtain its due reward. Should it occur, that to reward as well as to punish, was the example of the Deity, and that it might produce the same good consequence with less bloodshed, than to punish alone; the moralist and legislator would perhaps turn their thoughts towards some such a plan for favouring the poor, as I believe is now privately in agitation. But I perceive I am speaking rather as a magistrate, than as a critic.

Ver. 343.—All that they do in Gray's Bard (where certainly the *costumi* are not correctly painted, nor is the general idea remarkable for probability,) is to reduce it to a level with his other poems. If there are one or two images in his odes more magnified, or one or two phrases of a



more Grecian cast than one would desire, yet what are these compared with the weak passages of almost all other poets? and what remains is absolute perfection. It points out to all his poetical successors the true character of lyric harmony.

In order to see the forcible effect of the superstition on which "the Bard" is founded, when probability is scrupulously observed, we may turn to the "Fatal Sisters," in which the sentiments part naturally from the mind of the old poet; and therefore give it an ease which would have proved a great addition to "the Bard." But there always lies an appeal from the tribunal of art to the judges of genius, to decide upon the total excellence of a work. If Gray's ode, in which the sentiments, in general, are exquisitely natural, deserves objection, what shall we say of the style of Petrarch's poetry, in which the whole series of thoughts is commonly in a bad taste, so as to account for the prejudice against him of many persons, upon the whole of good judgment? his life indeed is more *poetical* than his writings, which I have sometimes been almost tempted to condemn altogether; but I am now persuaded that

from what remains of him, one may certainly discover he was capable of the greatest things. He was inspired by a most poetical passion, and assisted by genius ; but unluckily, being acquainted with the philosophy of Plato, and thinking highly of every thing ancient, instead of praising his mistress in the way nature dictated, he thought it necessary, on most occasions, to versify some quaint notion suggested by his studies. Yet while his far fetched subject is, as much as possible, obstructing him in composition, he nevertheless contrives by the power not only of pure, but energetic language, to express his *feelings and sentiments* in spite of his *thoughts*. In this he differs from Cowley, whose object is wholly wit and thought. Thus beauties are sometimes found scattered over many of his inferior poems. I have somewhere seen an observation which, in effect was, that no exception ought to be taken to a mixture of wit or ingenious conceit with poetry, as both were equally successful efforts of the mind. But surely no two things are more uncongenial than wit and sentiment, and therefore more calculated to destroy each other's effect, where fancy is predominant, and not reason,

as in a pamphlet. But there are a few faultless poems in Petrarch : and the striking character and history of the man ensure to us the possibility of making an interesting selection from his works.

Ver. 347.—As some late romances seem almost purposely written to exemplify a rule at the beginning of this work, so another is as remarkably illustrative of this. The inferior effect of the conclusion, to that of the preceding parts of “ the Monk,” must be obvious.

Is it not too great ease, that we, in similar cases, disapprove of ; and in cases where the *whole* composition is feeble, is it not the very inadequacy to *difficulty* that displeases ? Helvetius makes utility (or the benefit acknowledged by all from either useful or ornamental qualities) the sole test of mental merit. But the pleasure arising from the contemplation of a writer’s design, or of difficulty, makes a part of that utility ; and I believe where *contrivance has a proportionate good effect*, we universally esteem every work according to the quantity of contrivance, as well as other beauties, in it. But certainly quantity of genius often gives a choice of quality of talents. The dancer whom

he instances, had he been possessed of abilities, would have shown them in various ways unconnected with his profession; and we know very well, that the statesman who keeps the French in check, was perhaps a good Latin poet at Eton school.

Lock defines liberty, power. So this difficulty I am speaking of may be defined, ease. It is, in fact, ease in doing what is difficult to many. This is necessary to be observed, it being natural to attach the idea of labour to the performance of what is difficult to be done. An acquaintance with literature, obtained without assistance, by one of the lowest rank, is generally attributed to great strength of mind, when it may be owing chiefly to a literary turn. I should think it might in general be equally due to both.

Ver. 358.—The consequence of the piece is at least twofold; for not only is lyric poetry ingrafted upon tragedy, but music upon that. Both the alleged probability and improbability of the chorus may be explained by comparing the whole collection of persons on a stage, and in a concert-room. As the company or band in the latter only converse among one another when the music ceases, every thing is perfectly natural. But let us

suppose, that during that time one of the company addressed another at the farther end of a bench, in a song. Or suppose one musician to speak to another, across the orchestra, in recitative. This would seem by no means in the common course of things; yet it is similar to the idea of the chorus suggested by some part of every choral play before the Battle of Eddington. The Italian opera is less rational; as it reminds us of a number of people assembled *only* to converse in recitative.

The very act of going to a concert proves the advantage in tragedy of music, which is in this manner allowed natural and probable. And thus the old dramatic constitution of Aristotle, with the religious establishment of the chorus, seems to serve as well as any subsequent plans that have been formed; tragedy being still naturally divided into those parts into which he divided them; namely, “the fable, the manners, the language, the sentiments, the apparatus of the theatre, and the **MUSIC.**”

Ver. 369.—All the following account is taken from Mr. Malone’s edition of Shakspeare; in which, in the prefatory parts, this interesting information is given more at large.



Ver. 387.—As fully described in the last volume of Dr. Burney's History of Music.

Ver. 405.—This sort of drama I have before recommended, in case want of time, of application, or of competence, makes it necessary. I then likened it to a sketch. The theatre, in part supplied by it, may remind us of the exhibition, where one room is allotted to drawings. It is to be wished, however, that very bold sketches should be produced by the art of the dramatist.

I have mentioned only these modern productions as sketches; but the plays of Sophocles, and of course the other Greek tragedians, are imperfect pieces in the nature of sketches; only in them there appears an idea of general composition; and not only a collection of unrivalled parts unscientifically, or erroneously put together. The Greek, French, and English stage, have all peculiar advantages. In the first there is an imposing display of dramatic merit, in so many pieces even now remaining, where there are choruses, discovering an outline of perfect tragedy, whereas modern times can produce but few. The character of the French stage is, that exact propriety and adherence to rules that would give complete effect to the higher ef-

forts of the art. But, in my opinion, Shakspeare deserves to be studied, especially by an English poet, more than any other author, to form a true idea of tragedy ; for the object in comedy is to

Catch the manners living as they rise.

Shakspeare's true and spirited pictures of the manners of distant ages, and his various powers, accord well with that extended scope of subject, I shall shortly speak of, as proper to be allowed this art.

Ver. 451.—Farce is esteemed by some, as Gibbon and Marmontel, a vicious sort of composition, and not deserving the notice of the critic. No dramatic Hogarth, therefore, according to their supposition, can arise. Sir Joshua Reynolds, however, remarks that we are justified in preferring the talents that are eminent in one line of painting, to those which are not so in another which is superior. I should therefore incline to go no farther than, with the Bishop of Worcester, to wish it banished from comedy. The spirited exaggerations of farce, in the hands of a writer of abilities, might expose absurdities in society, with at least as useful an effect as our great countryman has done. I do not know

a more infallible maxim in criticism than that of Boileau :

Un sonnet sans défaut vaut seul un long poëme.

So that however we rank the different sorts of poetical compositions, the superior value of any is always owing to the writer. In ranking them, I think we must take their length into consideration, as well as other circumstances ; for though the general strain of the work be not poetical, a great deal of valuable fancy must be called in to vary and adorn it, as Lucretius and others may prove. So that supposing each poem of the usual size, and equally executed, I should rank them as follows : epic poetry ; tragedy ; comedy ; the poems of middle size ; lyric poetry ; elegiac, or pastoral ; satiric ; imitative ; sonnet ; epigram. Therefore lyric is inferior to epic poetry ; yet the lesser odes of Gray are much more read than Glover's poem, though possessing merit. Satiric is inferior to lyric or elegiac poetry, if it is only on account of the assistance afforded by our passions ; as we know that

Facit indignatio versum :

Yet the satires of Pope have surely discovered more natural powers, than many attempts at a *truer* kind of poetry, that have since been made. But this very assistance which satire owes to human passions, gives it a claim to favour for that utility which it can command, but may not originate. Nothing can be more founded on nature than satire; for I would ask, if we lose all relish for it with the knowledge of the characters which are its object, how comes it to pass that we at this day prefer the Roman satirists to all others? The news-monger may wish to be more acquainted with the persons satirized by Juvenal; but the critic and man of taste will not have lost so much, that he cannot have a clear idea of the general merit of his poetry. Comedy, I apprehend, loses more than satire by time, as it represents more minutely and exactly the manners of a particular period; but that even preserves its interest to the latest ages.

Ver. 491.—It is the fashion, in these philosophizing days, to censure the English system of education, and to maintain, that the learned languages ought not to be taught, as they are at our seminaries. However new this declamation against the study of

words, and grammar, may appear to some, Quintilian, many centuries ago, answered the arguments on which it is founded. Greek was then the learned language, and from it was derived the Latin, as a great part of the languages of modern Europe is derived from both. But if the case should now appear altered, the following arguments may occur. An author can never be read to so great advantage as in his own language. We have therefore our choice, either to form our library of the best works that have been contributed by all ages and countries, as Homer, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Milton; or take such as could be produced by one age and country, as Bell's Poets. If we prefer the latter, on account of the waste of time passed in instruction, it may be objected, that the boy of quick parts can acquire any thing presently, at any time of his life; but that the slow boy, whatever he studies, can never blaze out as a man of talents. In the mean time they are perhaps both preparing for themselves the future resources of literature; and (what their parents themselves think of the most consequence, though a Paine, who has long lived out of his country, and could never have



been initiated into its society, has not been able to inform Europe of it) they are brought up in that manly manner, which is the most likely to render their conduct afterwards honourable to themselves and their country. Their parents are not over solicitous to secure them the blessings of modern philosophy, nor want them to be remarked for that air of flippant precocity which results from certain modes of education; but they wish good habits gradually to form, in the same manner they and their fathers remembered them to have formed at the same places, attended with the consequences of making us a spirited people, capable of defending the liberty of Europe, and displaying at least as many virtues and talents, at any given time, as the new fashioned system ever has produced. If, therefore, our education is productive of honour, bravery, and other qualities which, though the best, are above no human capacity, why should an unfortunate boy be called from the more natural employment of trundling a hoop, to be perplexed with maxims of philosophy? Those minds which are most inclined to any study, as well as most capable of it, should alone have application to it expected

from them, as they will alone benefit the country by it ; and this advantage, whatever may be said, can in no country be relied on more than in England. There have existed constantly, for three centuries, opportunities for the poorest man who perceives superior powers in any of his sons, to have him brought up in such a manner, free of expence, that he may hope to see him enjoying the first dignities. This proves our form of government equally favourable to liberty and science ; and is a glorious circumstance, not owing to modern innovation, but ancient institution. For that mankind improves, must follow from the existence of the same quantum of observation, and force of reason always in the world, while knowledge is every day greater. But this takes place imperceptibly, being discernible chiefly by a comparison between former ages and the present, and by no means in a degree proportionate to the expectations of enthusiasm. There is no reasoning with the philosopher who, from want of feeling, would not have our youth instructed in the language of Homer. I rather wish that, *as far as poetry goes*, even the fair sex should learn it, as

an accomplishment harmonizing with their native elegance, much more than interested address.

Ver. 525.—In England this style of comedy was not silenced, by law, but by having no attractions for us, except the humour of the only person who attempted it. Foote, the English Aristophanes, had a true comic genius, and had profited much by the study (if it may be so called) most useful to the comic writer, namely, that of the modes of life of all ranks of people in the country, particularly the metropolis. Perhaps an eagerness to display *this sort* of knowledge will not be allowed pedantry ; yet the action, in parts of his plays, may be found to stand still too much, that he may let us into an uncommon and unexpected share of it.

Ver. 541.—Southern was born and educated in Ireland.

Ver. 551.—The sect of Democritus (of which, however, I am unwilling to allow Johnson to be) have wisely taken advantage of the irregularity of the greatest dramatic poet ; and seem, by those means, almost to have silenced their opponents. The temptation its principles hold out to belong to it,

is easily conceived. The number can be but small of those who do, in comparison of those who do not, write with a knowledge of the principles of ancient criticism. Here, therefore, are at once an infinite number of people of all ranks, interested in representing observance of them as the greatest sign of dulness. Accordingly we see when art and genius come, by any chance, to be compared, many a vain person appears to exult in the idea of showing the character of his mind to be of a higher order, and to glow with all the genius of Shakspeare while he is deciding the question. When the person who affirms, that *Tom Jones* wrote *Shukspur*, is made to understand, that Pope and Boileau were two men, and poets, and that *Shukspur* was not, in truth, a book, but a still *cleverer fellow*, who did not understand Latin and Greek; he readily agrees with the modern critic in an opinion of the decided inferiority of the former, because it may tend to show even him to be a *genus*, for all *Aristotle*, *Horrice*, and such like folks. So that it seems a task equally disgraceful to take the side of art in a critical discussion, as Johnson feared it was to compose a dictionary. However, as there is

some chance that reason may finally be heard, to the confusion of declamatory criticism; I will venture to contribute what arguments I can, to promote that useful end.

I conceive it certain, that no person is able to form a judgment of a work, that can be relied upon, except from impulse and feeling; with his mind previously enlightened by rule, but totally uninfluenced at the moment by any thing that retards the admission into it of the author's ideas. This, as it is my opinion, was certainly that of those great critics who have been able to prove it by the exercise of unrivalled taste and acumen.

It may appear strange to maintain, that the adherents of art should decide without a reference to rule; but I go farther, and say, that the professed adherents of genius judge strictly and intolerantly by a rule, destitute of the beauty and propriety of that to which their opponents moderately lean. However the former prefer a work according to the degree of genius in it, the latter are not contented with that, and will not credit their assertion, but are always talking big of nature, and mother-wit; and thus, by every means rendering their



cause unpopular. In the same manner as this system discourages merit, united with regularity, so did Voltaire's criticisms discourage it, united with irregularity, as he evidently holds a transgression of the unities a principal fault in a dramatic work. But so as we are not prejudiced in this manner, we may carry art in the construction of a play even farther than Voltaire and the French, as I have elsewhere intimated. The means, now surely evident, of making it acceptable by means of action, must gradually put an end to the clamour of Democritus's sect, who far exceed him in absurdity.

Just as Socrates was said to have blamed the philosophical distinction between utility and right, so I think lovers of literature have to lament the critical separation of art and genius. It is, indeed, not to the least purpose : for if right, in the first case, and genius, in the second case, are equally preferred by all, our disputes can be only concerning words. It has been held, by a critic of merit, that " Dryden was the greater genius, but Pope the better artist." It will be judged whether I am not sufficiently favourable to genius, when I contend, that cannot be, supposing their works the only test. If Dryden

is altogether found, after a careful examination of them, to possess greater genius, he, I think, is the greater artist. But there is not enough of credit given to that reflex genius which is employed in perfecting composition, and which the man of taste will easily distinguish from powers merely acquired. That Michael Angelo is superior to Raphael must be owing to the few talents of the former outweighing the various ones of the latter. Raphael, Titian, and Correggio, having distinguished themselves by drawing, colouring, and the *chiaro scuro*, the Caracci's perceiving that "the force of nature could go no further," attempted to unite their excellences; and with rather more powers they might have succeeded as well as Milton. Therefore, universality of talent is rather creditable; at least a secondary greatness of imagination ought not to be put upon a level with composition in the highest degree spirited and masterly. Were Dryden to be judged the greater genius, I might allow Pope the most *useful* artist; as the portrait painter is the most useful painter. I confess, that in works of inferior poets I should lean more to art, than what is sometimes called genius, namely, some passages

with a little more felicity of thought and diction. But I should do this from an idea of the greater probability of genius being possessed by him who could artfully dispose his work, than him who was endowed with that eloquence and those powers only, to which two out of every four persons I meet seem fully equal. If this is an approved rule of judging, certainly there are daily opportunities of applying it.

Extreme polish in literature should have encouragement similar, and almost equal, to extreme polish in manners. The character does not essentially suffer by a want of this, especially if we aim, or at least allow others to aim, by respecting it, at that degree of perfection of which human nature is capable; but to observe slight deviations in others from the rules of behaviour, and to avoid them uniformly ourselves, both denote a mind properly awake, and a valuable knowledge of the world. Montesquieu remarks, that politeness in nations is the consequence of leisure. So, perhaps, polished composition ought to be looked for more from persons of easy circumstances. However, prejudice very much prevails with regard to this

question, and is perhaps on the increase. The Critical Reviewers, I see, have not quite escaped the contagion, though I must give them credit for comprehending, and summarily explaining, my system. I shall next proceed to make some remarks on their late criticism: and first, with regard to that part which is most connected with the subject I am upon, I shall observe, that I am doubtful of the precise extent of their meaning. They affirm the smallest portion of mother-wit to be worth all the rules of Aristotle and Bossu. But I would ask, is there no mother-wit in the works of Aristotle? It seems very lucky that Shakspeare did not commit to writing, and publish, those rules which guided him in the production of all his beauties, for otherwise even his fame might have been lessened as his merit increased. But the truth is, I have been very guarded in recommending correct composition, and have never failed to allow as much to mother-wit as any writer, however ignorant, could have done.

If it is said a discovery has only been thought to be made, I shall appeal to any literary man, whether the *fact* be not, that plays written con-

sistently with dramatic rules, have till now been supposed necessarily more languid, in representation, than others.

As to the private trial my play is said to have had, I shall not make that the subject of argument, nor insist much upon its having been acted a sixth time publicly with its former applause, being once since I mentioned its representation in print. I shall only ask, whether, if we at all reflect, we must not be convinced, that *action*, with competent good sense and probability, would be always equal to the effect I have attributed to it?

I have claimed no merit of a quality improper to boast of; and chiefly value myself on acting the part of a good Englishman, in contributing my mite of exertion; if I must not say to rival, at least to follow the example of, the French.

I allow that any person of great powers can write tragedy in a first rate style (and indeed this ought to have been inferred from every thing I have written); but there will be always something to desire, if any rule of composition is transgressed; and the seams that unnecessarily divide the canvas will be discernible beneath the brightest colouring.



I think as the work of improvement goes on, we shall allow that a tragedy may be considered a piece of mechanism, as much as any other production of fancy and genius ; for in the art of Salvator Rosa, who is compared to Shakspeare, this is so much the case, that painters find advantage in learning Brook Taylor's Principles of Perspective ; and this has never been reckoned a proof of dulness in them, though there is nothing in criticism so *mechanical* as mathematics. Where perspective is less absolutely essential, as in history painting (for the wonders wrought by the Greek painters, are spoken of by some who think the ancients were ignorant of perspective) it has an advantage in nature and degree resembling that of the dramatic principles of which I have given an example. When Metastasio and others praise Eschylus, not as a poet, but as an inventor, for his improvements in the drama, what is it but mechanical merit for which they praise him ?

Mason, it is known, entertained an opinion, that the ancient music in one sense was, and in another was not, superior to the modern. He thought that the Greeks knew how to produce the greatest effect by the union of poetry and music, but that

we had made the greatest progress in the mere art of combining sounds. This being premised, it will be easy to understand an extract of a letter from him to me, which I shall produce, dated March 26th, 1797, written after receiving from me the work in which I had mentioned the defects of all former plays, expressly including his own. It will be seen, that in fact he had not one objection to the improvement ; for were the songs of the drama I recommended set to ancient music, it would have completely met his ideas.

“ I will only say, that my ideas of the best species of drama coincide very much with yours, in all respects, except what relates to the intermixture of music with tragedies, which are meant for representation, or what you call stage effect. But with respect to music, you must understand me to mean modern music ; and I have delivered my sentiments so fully concerning the present imperfect alliance between poetry and music, in my fifth Essay on Cathedral Music, which I published about two years ago, that were I to say any thing here on the subject, I should be obliged to transcribe from my book.”

From the above it appears, that his objections

were wholly musical. I have also been favoured with, and permitted to mention, the opinion of Mr. Pye on the subject; who thereby proved that the only aim of his dramatic criticisms had been to free poets from undue restraint, as Dryden had before, doing justice likewise, as far as it went, to every kind of excellence. In particular he expressed his persuasion, that the Battle of Eddington, filled as it is with action, would with characteristic dresses, amuse an audience throughout, if it were even three times its present length.

I would again recommend to those who extol irregularity, because they can find some in Grecian literature, to reflect upon the extreme finish and correctness of Grecian sculpture. I would wish them too, to reflect upon the reason of this; the human form always existed in equal perfection, but whether an audience is favourable to dramatic experiment, must depend upon the laws and customs of a country; and those of Athens, as I have said in another place, were not sufficiently so to perfect tragedy. The mere scholar, therefore, may learn something from the connoisseur, concerning the Grecian idea of finish; nor will he himself recollect, that at the time of Praxiteles,

the rudeness even of Phidias, was generally regretted.

Some critics seem to think the advantage of *taste* (as they slightly call adherence to rules of writing) is only in assisting the inferior effects of composition, as in pleasing by the contemplation of order and fitness. But this is far from being the case. The writer who adopts this mode may say, *aut Cæsar, aut nullus*, as well as those critics; his aim being, where the subject favours him, to give more effect to deep pathos, and the style of Euripides, than he could by any other method. As to the more clamorous and uneducated champions of the cause, who naturally wish ignorance admired, I will not recommend the public, like the good Socrates, to *execrate* them for a distinction, which enables them to conquer, by dividing, the possessors of merit: I will only recommend them to laugh good humouredly at their attempt to make others believe that they are *geniuses*, when, in fact, they are only *genuses*. It is not for the interest of real merit that criticism should be decried. True genius is not perplexed or puzzled in the wilderness of rules; but though unused to the track, its piercing eye discovers easily a different way lead-

ing to the same point, and in the mean time wanders carelessly over the wild flowers it amuses itself in gathering, free from envy and discontent.

Ver. 567.—I here terminate active opposition, though fair and constitutional, to their theatrical majesties, and their adherents. My claim for favour being now more known, whatever is thought of it, I have no farther ambition ; and, having lost all inclination for a theatrical *place*, intend to be an independent voter. Those Reviewers, whose intentions in criticism, on observing the consistency of all their dramatic opinions, I have formerly done justice to, will have assisted me in developing my system by the discussion they occasioned. Any future dramatic attempt I shall publish in the first instance, not wishing henceforward that trouble which a connection with theatres must be attended with.

Ver. 589.—If the superiority of Southern, in his line, over Thomson, cannot be adduced as an example of this rule in all respects, those authors of similar merit, on the whole, will better exemplify the spirit of it than any other eminent ones. We need not look so far, however, for perfect instances of the truth of Horace's observation. The frequent success of those who, with a knowledge of



the theatre, exhibit pictures of human life in careless or common language, and know how sometimes to throw in a popular sentiment; and the frequent failure of those literary men, who compose harmonious dramas, unassisted by energy of plot, at once explain and justify his meaning.

Ver. 604.—The Bishop of Worcester traces the sentimental cast of the Greek tragedies to the schools of Athens. Is not that age exactly caricatured by the present? Voltaire, Helvetius, Diderot, and all that set, have filled most works of imagination with the less dignified spirit of modern philanthropy: so that now this style is carried, we must own, quite far enough.

Ver. 608.—As criticism, whether enlightened or not, has lately spoken slightly of *style*, it would be well that writers should not be misled, to explain whether all eloquence is meant to be condemned; if it is so, I do not know what list of authorities can be produced on the other side of the question, to counterbalance, among others, the opinions of the following superior men: first, Julius Cæsar; who, in his character of Terence, allows him *half* the merit of Menander, on account

of the purity of his style : secondly, Dryden ; who in preferring Milton to all the ancients, particularly mentions the magnificence of his expression : thirdly, Gray ; who says *expression* is always the great point with him ; “ I do not mean,” he adds, “ the mere choice of words, but the whole dress, fashion, and arrangement of a thought.” But even of the power of *words* we know what, lastly, Burke said in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. Surely there may be able persons of partial taste, who are not sufficiently sensible to some kinds of beauty, and such I must suppose all who do not kindle with the eloquence of those great masters of style, whose writings are an ornament to every country where literature and the arts have flourished.

If by style, is meant only the judicious collocation of words, according to the rules of grammar, and of propriety, even to that respect, rather than contempt, is due ; and we should not be too much prejudiced against it, though a deficiency in it is often made the subject of minute criticism.

Ver. 611.—We have, however, rather cause for observation than complaint. It seems plain that

the mind will run greater hazard of being narrowed by the state of society in a large wealthy country ; as the division of labour must necessarily give partial views of things to a large number of people, though it gives to some extraordinary advantages in improving their judgments. Till therefore the knowledge of the latter can be brought so to bear, as to make its effect more sensible and certain upon the minds of the former (which can only be expected from the future improvement of society) there will remain that confusion in morals, which gives a pretext to the discontented to slander the existing government, as well as the country. The love of gain inspired by commerce must give energy to this chaotic principle ; and therefore, on a comparison of such a country as this with some others, we need not wonder at finding it condemned, by superficial reasoners, for bigotry, illiberality, profligacy, fraud, and corruption ; nor at the clamour raised against it by many literary politicians. Ideas of the advantages of gain must so possess men's minds, and the fine arts be so much under rated, though seeming connected with the improvement of human nature, and though nobly founded on

reason and metaphysics, that persons who ardently encourage them, may be punished with censure and contempt, instead of rewarded with gratitude and esteem. People will be fond (if I may so term it) by a sort of *worsted-stocking* economy, of putting a stop to expences incurred in the elegant pursuits of architecture and gardening, though compatible with the satisfaction of every claim on honour and generosity. When this is the case, as there is no reason, it must be plain there can be no other motive for such conduct than envy and censoriousness. On the other hand, it would be but fair to such cautious lovers of art, to make a distinction between them, and those who thoughtlessly ruin themselves, in order to enrich artists who (for such may be imagined) PRODUCE WORKS DISGRACEFUL TO THE COUNTRY; and who, pretending an enthusiasm for their art, are really only proud of their skill in making money. All the inconveniences, however, I allude to, tend to prove the advanced state of a society, which, if still farther advanced, would be free from those inconveniences, and at the same time enjoy the advantages now producing them. It is only necessary to encourage a moderate and just

way of thinking, to teach respect of all the various endeavours to benefit society ; and to preserve the present system of things in England, making just such political improvements, without using abstract terms of a French character, like *reform*, as will shew us to be *all moving together*.

I approve much of the wish, expressed in Professor Robison's postscript, for " generosity and candour, which would temper the commercial principle which seems to regulate the national transactions of modern Europe, and whose effects seem less friendly to the best interests of humanity, than even the Roman principle of glory." Those authors who derive subsistence from their works, and yet take care that they shall deserve praise, have the greatest possible merit.

Ver. 623.—It would be desirable that standard works should be even more handsomely bound and printed, provided inferior works should have less honourable attention paid to their outside. The bookseller who observes this scale encourages the perusal of the best books, by pointing them out, and therefore does service to literature. The greatest part of a library ought to resemble a tombstone



and inscription, either plain, or but little ornamented; but the binding of the very best authors should seem in the nature of a magnificent marble monument, executed by Deare.

Ver. 681.—It is indeed a weighty undertaking; and we see, when the poet considers it otherwise, what a gossamery lightness it has, even with the help of good poetry.\* Though Tasso wrote his poem young, yet he gave the subject such consideration as to rank deservedly among the first epic poets. Perhaps, however, even he, had he written later in life, with an easy mind, might have added some true epic touches, which would not have injured it. The age of thirty has been thought better than an earlier to compose tragedy; and might not forty or fifty be reckoned preferable to an earlier for epic poetry? at that time of life, an extensive general knowledge must have been acquired, to give proper variety to that species of composition; as it has been made to do ever since the time of Homer. Its true character is knowledge, sublimated by fancy.

\* See Dryden's dedication to the Earl of Dorset, where he treats this subject.

This call for variety seems to establish a difference between epic poetry and the drama.

Tragedy is made up of *action* and *pathos*; but as the latter partakes of the serious intention of the former, it tends only to render it the more sensible; and therefore action is the end of tragedy.

Comedy may be said, likewise, to be made up of *action* and *manners*; nor is the former of small importance, but the amusive gaiety, or peculiar character, of manners not tending to fix the thoughts on action, it is put out of view; and therefore manners are the proper aim of comedy.

But epic poetry is ambitious of *uniting* as objects the action of tragedy, and in part, the manners of comedy. I say *in part*, because it is only the more serious manners that it delights in displaying. The ludicrous descriptions of Vulcan and Thersites are no addition to the Iliad. I think, however, it is evident, we not only attend to, but *dwell upon*, manners in the Odyssey.

Ver. 682.—We are now arrived at the passage upon which Calsabigi built his system. The British Critic does not see the importance of his essay; and indeed I was tempted to pause before I determined

upon publishing the translation, though it did not then occur to me by what management I could make it free from objection. I now see a mode I wish I had exactly pursued; for were I to republish it, I should just leave out the last half, which contains the criticisms on Count Alfieri's tragedies. When the first part is read alone, I am convinced it must appear, though not remarkably deep, yet truly interesting, partly from historical information, and partly from the novelty and curious nature of the general idea; which at least it may be said has not been yet proved erroneous. It was likewise of advantage to me to show that there was one critic and poet of reputation, of the same way of thinking as myself.

I am persuaded that we shall acquire a much juster idea of tragedy by examining how far it is of the nature of history-painting; which I think it exactly resembles. The same desire of interesting by the representation of an historical event, is the motive in both arts; and in both I think the style of Euripides will not alone be thought interesting. Aristotle, who has provided for more future cases than it could be conceived possible for the first critic to do, has, in his eighteenth chapter, enumerated four different species of tragedy;

and Mr. Twining has an excellent note upon that passage, to which I refer the reader. One thing must be confessed, namely, that *to affect* is the constant purpose of tragedy ; but provided that is done, provided the action does not stand still for the production of any beauties, it may render those beauties not its avowed end, but its principal instrument of pleasure. Pity and terror are the means by which tragedy affects ; as much therefore as can result from rapidity of action, may be expected ; but even where this was wanting, tragedies have not always been preferred according to their effect on the passions. The Cid of Corneille is perhaps of all his plays the most recommended, by its subject, to many lovers of the drama ; but the philosophical critic will prefer the Cinna, as a more favourable specimen of the elevated character of his poetry. Must not many scenes and speeches, marked with sublime sentiment, powerful eloquence, or striking manners, lose their value, if our sole object, real as well as apparent, be to excite terror and pity ? Shall we not too be confined to fewer subjects, and prevented from bringing upon our stage many an event, which, assisted by a good plot, might fill the mind solely by its importance. The mere picture of feudal manners, in the

first scene and fourth act of Richard the Second, where the nobles rise successively hurling defiance at each other, and the crusading priest closes the scene with a characteristic speech, conveys so pleasing an idea of the times, that it does not permit us to regret the absence of any other style. How much preferable is it to the truly comic scene between Harapha and Samson! Mr. Pye, in the concluding paragraph of his commentary, founds his preference of Shakspeare to our other tragic poets, on his universal talents, as necessitated to acknowledge them more suited to epic poetry than tragedy. Allowing, however, this wider scope, which I have recommended for tragedy, all the various powers of a great poet will legitimately be exerted; nor will Shakspeare's add more to his character as a poet, than as a dramatist. Mr. Pye observes likewise, that Aristotle shows a prejudice in favour of Sophocles, though he commends Euripides as the most tragic. Pathos being the quality *peculiar* to tragedy, he seems obliged so to commend him. Indeed his style should be always preferably *in contemplation*, as the history painter is known to prefer a piteous or terrible subject, unless the circumstances of a different historical event are particularly favourable.



The President of the Royal Academy has painted two pictures, which are perhaps more known from the prints of them than any other of his works. One is the death of General Wolfe; and the other, which is in my possession, is the settlement of Pennsylvania by William Penn. The former of these, in which besides the effect that results from colouring and composition, (which answers to so much pity and terror as is quite indispensable) is that produced by a pathetic subject, resembles a tragedy of Euripides. But the latter, which makes its impression upon us by the mere moral of the event represented, is esteemed by Mr. West not only the better of the two, but his masterpiece.

History painting, on a contemplation of it, suggests to us other sorts of dramatic compositions, which, though not requiring to be extended beyond one or two acts, from a want of equal dignity and equal resources with comedy and tragedy; yet would be an acquisition. One is the mask, pantomime, or any such work that does not appeal to our reason, but raises wonder by exceeding the bounds of credibility. Another, is such a piece as aims at representing some comic event, which either really existed formerly, or interests as much as if it did, by being treated of in some favourite

play or novel. Such subjects I think might be well confined to interludes.

Hogarth often blended farce and comedy in his works. Whether the latter, unsupported as it is, either by exaggeration or historical interest, is fruitful enough of subjects to the painter, can yet hardly be known. The frontispiece to every comedy represents one of its striking situations with effect; but this relates to something antecedent, and is of the nature of those compositions I have been speaking of. The draughtsman's object was not, like the comic poet, to describe general manners, according to an idea that arose, at the moment, in his mind; but like him who would bring Tom Jones on the stage, to imitate imaginary events which had before pleased.

Ver. 718.—It is less wonderful that Gibbon could amuse himself with “the bubble reputation,” and think it more than an equivalent for the checks received in the world by authors; as he was not one of the tribe whose disadvantages are here pointed out. If an historian fails, there is an appearance of sense and utility in his pursuit, that is a sort of title of honour. Every poet, on the contrary, *has a nick-name*; so that it is not easy for him to acquire more fame

than he loses, during his life; and therefore, if he judges rationally, he will probably commence author for the pleasure of literary experiment, or from a motive of sincere love of his art; unless his object be to derive a profit from the sale of his works.

This is full as much the case where there exists transcendent merit. I cannot think, with Johnson, that Milton anticipated with so much confidence, the future success of *Paradise Lost*. The more it deserved favourable reception, the more would its author have been aggrieved and *outwitted* at its being forgotten; and we must cease to moralize on the uncertainty of human affairs, unless we allow that to have been possible. He was truly, as he says, *fallen on evil days*, if we consider him alluding to the period, not at, but after the Restoration. He had no motive to be convinced his politics had been wrong, under a king who encouraged profligacy, and was a pensioner of France.

Ver. 742.—We shall find very few critics to whom literature is more indebted. When I have learning approaching to that of this reverend Prelate, I shall be able better to estimate it; but I have enough of Greek and of Pindar to remark σοφος ὁ πολλὰ εἰδώς φῦα; and of common sense to know, that it is impossible to find

out the character of a composition in a lexicon, whether living or inanimate. Mr. Pye, who also condescends to criticize rationally, and without declamation, gives us a pleasing picture, in Aristotle, of a superior critic, who, while he is arguing in support of a theory not quite convincing, is so careful and circumspect, that the arguments on the other side of the question in the mean time gradually appear to him, and he seems at length hardly contented with an opinion he had entertained. This careful error is surely safer than the formation of slight rules on all occasions, with an air of ease and certainty, that do not only go to arrange, but alter, composition ; in order to acquire the praise of originality. By many, those rules which seem obvious after being invented, appear to want originality for the same cause as they possess merit : and others that are different, please, and are extolled by them, because they surprise. But time unplumes, or reduces to their just estimation, their inventors : in other words, that I may rest on the authority of the last quoted obscure Greek poet, ἀμεροὶ δ' ἐπιλοιποὶ μαρτυρὲς σοφῶταί.

Ver. 746.—This is a very good rule to induce a poet to keep his work a long time by him : but I rather

incline to wish it broken preparatory to every new edition; for it is more becoming for the author to consider it as an attempt to please the public, than as a production, to remain less acceptable than it might be, only to show *his* style of composition. However, unless he can correct, in some degree *con amore*, no delay at all is necessary; but correction may be injurious, and produce that elaborate style, that *bardness*, which though sometimes critics think they see it in easy finish, is not, where it really exists, to be commended.

Ver. 772.—I have separated these two poets in the imitation. As Homer has been thought, by some modern philosophers, to have let slip “the dogs of war” on the human race, a fuller description of Tyræus will show him at least, for the honour of poetry, to have been engaged in a more popular employment.

Ver. 784.—That is to say at least what I have before called “inborn art” is a requisite of superior merit. Voltaire has translated one play of Calderon, and the Julius Cæsar of Shakspeare, in order, with impudence peculiar to himself, to represent them as written with similar irregularity. He is obliged, in



making this comparison, to take notice of the greater good sense and contrivance of Shakspeare, which is equivalent to affirming that the two poets are alike, *only* different.

This play of Calderon does not badly exemplify the monster at the beginning of the poem; and will show a want of thought and art that must be displeasing to all.

Ver. 843.—Johnson appears to me a great critic, though with a bounded taste. He is not an authority, but when he judges right, the depth of his reasoning, the force and frequent beauty of his style, and the ingenuity of his remarks, make us peruse him with a greater satisfaction than most critics. He had not only a strong, but a fine genius; and though he was less fit than Pope to “wander in fancy’s maze,” he might have made us rivals of the ancients in the highest sort of satire. Even Johnson would not use words of six feet, in poetry. Whether, besides those faults in his prose, which have been *discovered*, others may not have been *imagined*, I shall not pretend to say.

There is something interesting in the surly spleen of a Johnson, and the whimsical fastidiousness of a

Gray; nor are the errors derived from prejudice universal; but the modern disposition to novelty is always *equally* hazarding opinions.

Gray, who showed the most exquisite possible natural taste, in general, and had the most extensive knowledge, yet in giving his opinion of works, the characters of which are now established, has sometimes shrunk into a common man.

Mason had just those qualities, as a critic, which Johnson wanted. He does not reason and investigate after his manner; but the talent *ponere totum* is very discernible in his criticisms. He can generally be relied on as an authority, always judging carefully and with equal regard to every objection, wherever he has taken occasion to express his opinions. Indeed, though an excellent poet, he seems to think it less necessary in poetry, where he cannot mislead, than in criticism, to do constant justice to his subject. Such a well ballasted mind, in a critic, may be set against a great deal of abstruse knowledge.

Ver. 871.—The Bishop of Worcester shows by his note, that he would make a distinction between a Petrarch and an Empedocles.

Ver. 886.—After all, may it not, to one who would

Rejudge the past, and dignify disgrace, be the subject of another *historic doubt*, whether Empedocles, who was both a naturalist and a poet, might not, in the former character, like many a philosopher, have ventured somewhat too near the crater of a burning mountain, than like no other person whatever, have performed the feat here recorded of him?

Having had so much occasion in these notes to compare POETRY and PAINTING, I may possibly throw light upon the subject by considering some arts allied to them. GARDENING has been observed to differ in some points from landscape-painting, which is, in respect to it, what classical learning is to poetry; Brown, I think, being enabled to do without it, not perhaps as Shakspeare, but as Otway or Southern, did without the rules of criticism. Mr. Wheatley has remarked the good effect of a heath, in painting, though it is unattainable in a real landscape. On the other hand, he has remarked the obstacles to representing on canvas a down-hill prospect. Congruity likewise allows the rudest fore-ground in a picture. These differences therefore ought to be attended to in gardening. Poetry does not, like painting, unfold the principles of

this art, but contains within its volumes ideas of effects which may be assistant in the cultivation of it. Of two beautiful spots, that gives the most pleasure which recalls to our recollection a fine poetical description, and the pleasure it has before given us. There might be no objection, therefore, to plant, in order to produce one assemblage of forms, rather than the other. Could several spots in a plantation remind us of the most favourite descriptions in poetry, it might add to the amusement it furnished. The literary country gentleman may see in his park (which is a kind of forest) and his garden, not only a natural distribution of ground, but such as is suggested by the standard poets of modern Italy; and may, by their aid, give force to the character of wild forest scenes, like those where the feats of chivalry took place, or polished gardens, like Alcina's and Armida's, adorned with

Acque stagnanti, mobili cristalli,  
Fior vari e varie piante, erbe diverse,  
Apriche collinette, ombrose valli,  
Selve e spelonche in una vista offerse;  
E quel che il bello, e il caro accressce all' opre  
L' arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.

I do not, however, wish any thing more to appear to the *uninformed* beholder, than a simple park and shrubbery, where such is the nature of the grounds. Still less would I admire a scene of a different character at every turn, according to the mode ridiculed by Cleon, in Mason's English Garden.

As this art is connected, or affects similarly, with poetry and painting only where they represent rural beauty and architecture, so common SCULPTURE is connected with them chiefly where they describe human actions, or imitate the human form, and that species of sculpture is wholly so which is called GEM-ENGRAVING, and in which Mr. Nathaniel Marchant has excelled all the moderns.

ARCHITECTURE is much more connected with painting than with poetry, which can seldom represent clearly a magnificent building. It is connected with painting of an inferior sort, where it is not with gardening, as in describing the interior of a house or church. It has no connection with sculpture, unless by their affinity to painting, except in the assistance it derives from it, both alone and in common with gardening, within and without doors.

MUSIC has been fancifully supposed connected with



any art but poetry. Harmonious versification is an inferior music, and we are more immediately affected by the music, than the painting, of poetry.

THE SCENIC ART is more or less connected with all the others. The qualities exclusively possessed by each of these arts are as follows :

1st. Necessary utility belonging to ARCHITECTURE.

2dly. The power of realizing so much ideal beauty in scenes of nature, and of rendering it useful as the genius of a place will allow of; which belongs to GARDENING.

3dly. The quality attributed in the life of Lorenzo di Medici to GEM-ENGRAVING, namely of communicating to works of genius the additional value of a precious substance; which I will observe here would somewhat resemble costly book-binding, if this required no other effort than the author's.

4thly. The power which SCULPTURE has, of exhibiting the whole human form, without the deception of perspective, exactly resembling the portraits of ancient characters, or else according to the refined fancy of the artist.

5thly. The power which PAINTING has, either of

exhibiting *the same* forms (as the Niobe) with the advantage of colouring, and every related object to enforce the story; or else of creating as much ideal beauty in landscape as is possible, without the least restraint.

6thly. The power possessed by MUSIC of enchanting and filling the mind, by the simple force of sounds.

7thly. That power of representing motion to the eye, in a fictitious event, which we conceive in sculpture and painting by inference from attitude, even in poetry only through the medium of language; but in THE SCENIC ART directly and completely. For this art realizes, with some exceptions, the painter's fancies in history, as gardening does in landscape.

8thly, and lastly. The privilege POETRY possesses of conveying clear ideas, by a sort of inferior music, which all the united force of mere unassisted melody has in vain pretended to do.

After having endeavoured to make the reader better acquainted both with the arts themselves, and their mutual connection, I shall conclude these Notes with a wish, that he would extend that favour he may naturally be disposed to show any one of them, to all; as well as that he would believe I am sincere and

disinterested in this wish, by no means being one of those who, as an anonymous satirist says, “ would be thought infallible judges of literature.” Every person of *unaffected* candour will give me credit for merely wishing my remarks considered, that new light may be struck out either by objection, or concurrence. I am, in truth, as little inclined to the Jacobinical archtyranny of improperly influencing the opinions of men, as to the monkish meanness of aiming to thwart a sober spirit of inquiry.



MILTON'S  
SAMSON AGONISTES,

BEN JONSON'S  
SILENT WOMAN,

AND  
VOLTAIRE'S  
SEMIRAMIS,

REDUCED ACCORDING TO THE DRAMATIC  
PRINCIPLES EXEMPLIFIED IN THE

BATTLE OF EDDINGTON;

IN ORDER TO SHOW THEIR EFFECT ON WORKS  
OF ESTABLISHED REPUTATION.



THE

AMERICAN

REVIEW

OF

THE

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REVIEW

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

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MILTON's tragedy may appear to be much curtailed in the following pages ; but it acquires, by such means, that rational as well as theatrical rapidity of march which the example of the managers, in shortening our finest plays for representation, justifies us in communicating to it, for the purpose of showing the true nature of the drama. It might, in nearly this form, be acted as an interlude, without danger of being ill received. The choruses would not only give it variety, but desirably prolong it in the representation. I have excluded from them every thing that has not quite the appearance of song ; so that there is no more left of that confused mixture of song and dialogue, which I had been the first to forbear introducing in a choral play.

I will make one remark more upon my alteration of this tragedy. There are very often speeches of a single line in the Greek tragedies, continuing for a

long time together, and a single piece of information, which the mind is eager to obtain, is splintered into several of these speeches by the means of question and answer. Whether it was from the example of Shakspeare, or from his own unbiassed judgment, Milton has not imitated the ancients much in this respect, I have only had occasion in the last scene to form one speech of several, which will be there perceived. Unity requires, that what is assevered of one thing should be confined to one speech, unless its division gives extraordinary force to the composition.

I have elsewhere mentioned the reasons of my approving the French division of plays into scenes, and custom of numbering them. I have another reason now for reprinting the *Silent Woman*, after reducing it, in this form, which is, that foreigners, who will understand a play better divided in a manner they are used to, may see how well contrived a comedy was produced in England, long before the theatre flourished in France. Indeed this play approaches nearer to perfection in its structure, upon the whole, than most I am acquainted with. Nobody more perfectly understood the nature of comedy than Jonson. His object is invariably to present his characters to us one after

another, and, as it were, turn them round in our sight. Wit does not in him predominate over humour, nor the interest of the action over both. But there is so much action in the *Silent Woman*, that it will show clearly, what I have elsewhere observed, that a great deal may be admitted into comedy, forming consequently a series of many pictures, as there are in this long comedy about ninety scenes. Yet, though I have had to reduce the dialogue, I have had also to reduce the action, which I perceived in some parts to be in too great quantity. This is not only reducible by lessening the number of the scenes, but by omitting incidents occurring in them, as I have, for instance, Truewit's offering a halter, and entering afterwards with a horn. If Jonson had not observed the unity of action better than Congreve and others, we must conclude he would have been much more confused and obscure. Terence, I think, did well to form a single play of two plots of Menander ; but he would have done still better, like Jonson, always to fill his plays with a *sufficient number* of incidents, all equally connected by one action. I wish foreigners to consider the superior difficulty of connecting so

many more scenes than the French have ever done ; for the single fourth act of this play contains as many scenes, I believe, as any of their longest plays. Such an example of sterling resolution in *buckling-to* composition, was given by our old poet ! We know the opinion of this work entertained by Dryden, one of the greatest critics, and the natural head of the opposite sect to Aristotle's ; though in fact they would both mean the same thing, and very differently from many professed partizans of both. He observes, among other things, that " the intrigue is the greatest and most noble of any pure unmixed comedy in any language." Yet I think a comparison of Ben Jonson and Moliere will instance what I have said in a former part of this volume. The improvement in rapidity of action is perhaps originally due to the English custom of violating the unities. Jonson has shown *the manner* of preserving it more consistently with dramatic rules, though he did not precisely ascertain the proper bounds of action and dialogue, nor fully and intelligibly prove the power, when doubted, of arresting the attention of an audience by the simple force of thought. But though by the invention of



mechanical beauties, and art in giving them effect, Jonson has benefited literature in a manner that does him honour ; and that Moliere has not ; I think him an inferior artist, because I think Moliere a greater genius. Pope's art, on the contrary, has so much genius incorporated with it, that I think he stands in a different relation to Dryden, to whom I consider him fully equal. Not but that Jonson also was a man of genius ; he had a great command of humour, and his happy art of itself shows more powers than all the works of those declaimers against that quality, whom we have heard or read of labouring to establish the fame of their irregular compositions ; and whose opinions, if admitted to be the result of less *beaviness* than rational criticism, must finally succeed in banishing all remembrance of common sense from the belles lettres. Even when a writer would wish us to infer his genius from his subject ; because, for example, he writes about enchanted castles, spectres, fays, and fairies, &c. we ought to doubt till further proof of it. But still more ought we to hesitate in allowing that, because incorrectness has been *formerly* found

united with genius, that, therefore, it must always remain *in future* its infallible criterion.

The Semiramis, as it is reduced, will show in what manner all the French tragedies might be reduced, and yet retain whatever is dramatic in them. Nothing can be fairer than for an Englishman to take the same liberty with Voltaire, that he did with Shakspeare.

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SAMSON AGONISTES.

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## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAMSON.

MANOAH, *the Father of Samson.*

DALILAH, *his Wife.*

HARAPHA *of Gath.*

*Public Officer.*

*Messenger.*

*Danites, with Harps, Cymbals, &c.*

*Attendant.*

*The SCENE before the Prison in Gaza.*

# SAMSON AGONISTES.\*

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## SCENE I.

*Samson, Attendant leading him.*

### VERSE 1—6.

SAMSON.

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand ;  
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade :  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,  
Daily' in the common prison else injoin'd me.  
This day a feast the people hold, this rest

\* I have omitted Milton's account of tragedy ; but his explanation of Aristotle's famous definition, justly applauded by the Attic translator of that critic (see Twining's Aristotle), still leaves me one observation to make. Milton translates it, " by raising pity and fear, or terror." Now this exactly accords with the idea Lessing and other Germans have formed of this passage. They contend that *φοβος* signifies *fear*, but



Their superstition yields me ; hence I seek  
 This unfrequented place to find some ease ;  
 Ease to the body some, none to the mind. [*he sits.*  
 O wherefore was my birth from heaven foretold  
 Twice by an angel, who at last in sight  
 Of both my parents all in flames ascended  
 From off the altar, where an offering burn'd,  
 As in a fiery column charioting  
 His godlike presence, and from some great act  
 Or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race ?  
 Why was my breeding order'd and prescribed  
 As of a person separate to God,  
 Design'd for great exploits ; if I must die,  
 Betray'd, captived, and both my eyes put out,  
 Lower than bond-slave ! Promise was that I

not *terror*. They explain themselves thus : the different works of Aristotle will prove, that what is translated “ *terror* ” means only a selfish alarm on imagining ourselves in the danger or distress we see ; and pity means only that philanthropic sentiment by which we either pity, or feel *terror*, for others ; so that they can never exist separately, but one is always in the same proportion as the other, and results from it. It is extraordinary, that Milton should seem to have thus anticipated the latest opinions upon the subject.

Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;  
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him  
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke——

*[dropping his voice.]*

Whom have I to complain of but myself?  
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
 Under the seal of silence could not keep,  
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it.  
 God, when he gave me strength, to show withal  
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair——  
 But peace, I must not quarrel with the will  
 Of highest dispensation.

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
 O first created beam, and thou great Word,  
 Let there be light, and light was over all;  
 Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?  
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear  
 The tread of many feet steering this way;  
 Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare  
 At my affliction, and perhaps t' insult.

## SCENE II.

*Samson, Attendant ; to them Danites.*

*Danite.* This, this is he ; softly awhile,  
 Let us not break in upon him.  
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief !  
 Or do my eyes misrepresent ? Can this be he,  
 That heroic, that renown'd,  
 Irresistible Samson ? whom unarm'd  
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could  
     withstand ;  
 Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,  
 Ran on embattel'd armies clad in iron,  
 And weaponless himself,  
 Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
 Of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass ;  
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
 Spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Asca-  
     lonite  
 Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turn'd  
 Their plated backs under his heel

Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
 The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,  
 A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine.  
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders  
     bore

The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar.

*Sam.* I hear the sound of words, their sense the  
     air

Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

*Dan.* He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless  
     in might,

The glory late of Israel, now the grief;  
 We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,  
 From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,  
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,  
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,  
 Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage  
 The tumours of a troubled mind,  
 And are as balm to fester'd wounds. [*Exit Att.*

## SCENE III.

*Samson, Danites.*

*Sam.* Your coming, friends, revives me, for I  
learn

Now of my own experience, not by talk,  
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends  
Bear in their superscription: tell me, friends,  
Am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool  
In every street? do they not say, how well  
Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?  
Immeasurable strength they might behold  
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;  
This with the other should, at least, have pair'd.

*Dan.* Tax not divine disposal; wisest men  
Have err'd, and by bad women been deceived;  
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,  
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.  
In seeking just occasion to provoke  
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,  
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness.



*Sam.* Had Judah join'd, or one whole tribe,  
 They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath;  
 But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,  
 Than to love bondage more than liberty,  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;  
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
 Whom God hath of his special favour raised  
 As their deliverer; if he aught begin,  
 How frequent to desert him, and at last  
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

*[Samson appearing agitated, the Danites  
 make signs to each other in order to join  
 in chorus.]*

### SONG.

*Just are the ways of God,  
 And justifiable to men;  
 Unless there be who think not God at all:  
 If any be, they walk obscure;  
 For of such doctrine never was there school,  
 But the heart of the fool.*

*Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,  
 As to his own edicts found contradicting,  
 Then give the reins to wandering thought,  
 Regardless of his glory's diminution ;  
 Till by their own perplexities involved,  
 They ravel more, still less resolved,  
 But never find self-satisfying solution.*

*Dan.* But see, here comes thy reverend sire  
 With careful step, locks white as down,  
 Old Manoah.

#### SCENE IV.

*Samson, Danites; to them Manoah.*

*Man.* O miserable change ! is this the man,  
 That invincible Samson, far renown'd,  
 The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength  
 Equivalent to angels walk'd their streets ?  
 I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness  
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a son,  
 And such a son as all men hail'd me happy :  
 Who would be now a father in my stead ?

O wherefore did God grant me my request,  
And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd !

*Sam.* Appoint not heavenly disposition, father ;  
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
But justly ; I myself have brought them on,  
Sole author I, sole cause : if aught seem vile,  
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned  
The mystery of God.

*Man.* True ; and thou bear'st  
Enough and more, the burden of that fault ;  
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,  
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,  
This day the Philistines a popular feast  
Here celebrate in Gaza ; and proclaim  
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud  
To Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd  
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands.

*Sam.* Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought  
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high.  
This only hope relieves me, that this strife  
With me hath end ; all the contest is now  
'Twixt God and Dagon : Dagon hath presumed,  
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,

His deity comparing and preferring  
 Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,  
 Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,  
 But will arise, and his great name assert.

*Man.* With cause this hope relieves thee, and these  
 words

I as a prophecy receive; for God,  
 Nothing more certain, will not long defer  
 To vindicate the glory of his name.  
 Thou must not in the mean while here, forgot,  
 Lie in this miserable loathsome plight,  
 Neglected. I already have made way  
 To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat  
 About thy ransome: well they may by this  
 Have satisfied their utmost of revenge.

*Sam.* Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble  
 Of that solicitation; let me here,  
 As I deserve, pay on my punishment;  
 And expiate, if possible, my crime.

*Man.* Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,  
 But act not in thy own affliction, son:  
 Repent the sin; but if the punishment  
 Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;  
 Or the execution leave to high disposal,

And let another hand, not thine, exact  
 Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps  
 God will relent, and quit thee all his debt.

*Sam.* His pardon I implore; but as for life,  
 To what end should I seek it? when in strength  
 All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes,  
 I walk'd about admired of all, and dreaded,  
 On hostile ground, none daring my affront.  
 Then swollen with pride into the snare I fell  
 Of a deceitful concubine, who shorn me  
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece.

*Dan.* Desire of wine, and all delicious drinks,  
 Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
 Thou could'st repress; nor did the dancing ruby  
 Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell,  
 Or taste, that cheers the hearts of gods and men,  
 Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

*Sam.* Now blind, dishearten'd, shamed, disho-  
 nour'd, quell'd,  
 To what can I be useful, wherein serve  
 My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,  
 But to sit idle on the household hearth,  
 A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze:  
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,



Till vermin or the draff of servile food  
 Consume me, and oft invoked death  
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

*Man.* But God, who caused a fountain at thy  
 prayer

From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay,  
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy  
 Cause light within thy eyes to spring,  
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.

*Sam.* All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,  
 So much I feel my genial spirits droop,  
 My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems  
 In all her functions weary of herself,  
 My race of glory run, and race of shame;  
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

*Man.* Believe not these suggestions, which pro-  
 ceed

From anguish of the mind and humours black,  
 That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,  
 Must not omit a father's timely care,  
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance  
 By ransome, or how else: mean while be calm,  
 And healing words from these thy friends admit.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE V.

*Samson, Danites.*

*Dan.* Many are the sayings of the wise,  
In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,  
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;  
But with the afflicted, in his pangs, their sound  
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune  
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;  
Unless he feel within  
Some source of consolation from above.

## SONG.

*God of our fathers, what is man !  
That thou towards him with hand so various,  
Or I might say contrarious,  
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,  
Not evenly, as thou rulest  
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,  
Irrational and brute ?*

*Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
Wandering loose about ;*

*Nor only dost degrade them, or remit  
To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,  
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them  
high,  
Unseemly falls in human eye,  
Too grievous for the trespass or omission.*

*Dan.* But who is this,  
That, so bedeck'd and gay,  
Comes this way sailing  
Like a stately ship,  
Sails fill'd and streamers waving,  
An amber scent of odorous perfume  
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind?  
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,  
And now, at nearer view, no other certain  
Than Dalilah thy wife.

SCENE VI.

*Samson, Danites ; to them Dalilah.*

*Sam.* My wife, my traitress! let her not come near me.

*Dan.* Yet on she moves ; now stands, and eyes thee fix'd.

*Dal.* With doubtful feet and wavering resolution  
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,  
Which to have merited, without excuse,  
I cannot but acknowledge ; yet if tears  
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew  
In the perverse event than I foresaw)  
My penance hath not slacken'd, though my pardon  
No way assured. But conjugal affection  
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,  
Hath led me on, desirous to behold  
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate.

*Sam.* Out, out hyæna! these are thy wonted  
arts,  
And arts of every woman false like thee,

To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,  
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech,  
 Confess, and promise wonders in her change,  
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
 Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,  
 His virtue, or weakness, which way to assail :  
 Then with more cautious and instructed skill  
 Again transgresses, and again submits.

*Dal.* Yet hear me, Samson ; not that I endeavour  
 To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
 But that on the other side if it be weigh'd  
 By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,  
 I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
 The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.  
 First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
 In me, but incident to all our sex ;  
 Curiosity, inquisitive, importune ;  
 Was it not weakness also to make known  
 For importunity, that is for nought,  
 Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety ?  
 And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,  
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway  
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,  
 Caused what I did ? I saw thee mutable



Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou would'st leave  
me—

No better way I saw than by impórtuning  
To learn thy secrets, get into my power  
The key of strength and safety : thou wilt say,  
Why then reveal'd ? I was assured by those  
Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd  
Against thee, but safe custody and hold :  
That made for me ; I knew that liberty  
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprizes,  
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,  
Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed ;  
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night.

*Sam.* I to myself was false ere thou to me ;  
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,  
Take to thy wicked deed ; which when thou seest,  
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,  
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
Confess it feign'd : weakness is thy excuse,  
And I believe it, weakness to resist  
Philistian gold : if weakness may excuse,  
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?

*Dal.* Since thou determinest weakness for no plea,

Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides :  
 It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,  
 That wrought with me : thou know'st the magis-  
       trates

And princes of my country came in person,  
 Solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urged,  
 Only my love of thee held long debate,  
 And combated in silence all these reasons  
 With hard contest : at length that grounded maxim  
 Of wisest men, that to the public good  
 Private respects must yield, with grave authority  
 Took full possession of me, and prevail'd.

*Sam.* I thought where all thy circling wiles  
       would end ;

In feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy.  
 Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave  
 Parents and country ; nor was I their subject,  
 Nor under their protection, but my own,  
 Thou mine, not theirs : if aught against my life  
 Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
 Against the law of nature, law of nations.

*Dal.* In argument with men, a woman ever  
 Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.  
 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson ;

I to the lords will intercede, not doubting  
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide  
 With me, where my redoubled love and care  
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,  
 May ever tend about thee to old age,  
 With all things grateful cheer'd, and so supply'd,  
 That what by me thou hast lost, thou least shalt  
 miss.

*Sam.* No, no, of my condition take no care ;  
 Nor think me so unwary or accursed,  
 To bring my feet again into the snare  
 Where once I have been caught ; I know thy  
 trains.

If in my flower of youth and strength, when all  
 men  
 Loved, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone could'st  
 hate me,

Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me,  
 How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
 Deceivable, in most things as a child  
 Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd.

*Dal.* Let me approach at least, and touch thy  
 hand.

*Sam.* Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance  
wake

My sudden rage, to tear thee joint by joint.  
At distance I forgive thee ; go with that ;  
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works  
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
Among illustrious women, faithful wives.

*Dal.* I see thou art implacable, more deaf  
To prayers than winds and seas—  
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing  
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?  
To mix with thy concernments I desist  
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.  
My name perhaps among the circumcised  
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes  
To all posterity may stand defamed ;  
But in my country, where I most desire,  
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,  
I shall be named among the famousest  
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,  
Living and dead recorded, who, to save  
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose  
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb  
With odours visited, and annual flowers ;

At this who ever envies or repines,  
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.\* [*Exit.*

\* This scene is perhaps worth all the rest of the play. I have in a former publication spoken of this tragedy as unassisted by the passion of love. In my own, in spite of prejudice, I felt myself proud of furnishing another example of one, where “high actions” were the sole object. I purposely avoided drawing off the attention from *the legislator*, like Home in his play of Alfred, to fix it upon a love-tale. Had mine been acted, justice certainly would have been done to the meditation and labour which was required for such an effort of *dramatic grouping* (so it may be called) as was shown in carrying theatrical propriety through sixty-three scenes. This kind of art is by no means overlooked by Aristotle, as his criticism on the fault of Carcinus will show. I do not boast of fame which might assist me in making this new and best form of tragedy (being most of any “by action, and not by narration”) generally known; yet as the love of truth and of inquiry is my only object, and as, besides, this matter is so clear in itself, I shall not fear the opposition of critics of the greatest popularity. Johnson discouraged poetry by the censures of erroneous taste; but I think he would not have grudged the praise of a success, as in the present instance, capable of proof. At least, it must be extraordinary to change an opinion favourable to the unities, just when they have been proved compatible with dramatic interest.



SCENE VII.

*Samson, Danites.*

*Dan.* She 's gone ; a manifest serpent, by her  
sting

Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

*Sam.* So let her go ; God sent her to debase me,  
And aggravate my folly, who committed  
To such a viper his most sacred trust.

SONG.

*It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,  
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit  
That woman's love can win, or long inherit ;  
But what it is, hard is to say,  
Harder to hit,  
( Which way soever men refer it ).*

*Favour'd of Heaven who finds  
 One virtuous, rarely found,  
 That in domestic good combines :  
 Happy that house ! his way to peace is smooth :  
 But virtue, which breaks through all opposition,  
 And all temptation can remove,  
 Most shines, and most is acceptable above.*

*Therefore God's universal law  
 Gave to the man despotic power  
 Over his female in due awe ;  
 Nor from that right to part an hour,  
 Smile she or lour :  
 So shall be least confusion draw  
 On his whole life, not sway'd  
 By female usurpation, or dismay'd.*

*Dan.* Look now for no enchanting voice, nor  
 fear

The bait of honied words ; a rougher tongue  
 Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,  
 The giant Harapha of Gath, his look  
 Haughty as is his pile high-built, and proud.

## SCENE VIII.

*Samson, Danites; to them, Harapha.*

*Har.* I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,  
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
Though for no friendly intent. Much I have heard  
Of thy prodigious might, in this displeased,  
That I was never present on the place  
Of those encounters, where we might have try'd  
Each other's force, in camp or listed field;  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey.

*Sam.* The way to know were not to see, but taste.

*Har.* Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O that fortune  
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed  
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;  
I should have forced thee soon with other arms,  
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.

*Sam.* Boast not of what thou would'st have done,  
but do

What then thou would'st, thou seest it in thy hand.

*Har.* To combat with a blind man, I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

*Sam.* Such usage as your honourable lords  
Afford me, assassinated and betray'd.

Therefore, without feign'd shifts, let be assign'd  
Some narrow place inclosed, where sight may give  
thee,

Or rather flight, no great advantage on me ;  
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet  
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,  
Vant-brass and greaves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,  
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield,  
I only with an oaken staff, will meet thee.

*Har.* Thou durst not thus disparage glorious  
arms,

Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,  
Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
And black enchantments, some magician's art,  
Arm'd thee, or charm'd thee strong, which thou from  
Heaven

Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
Were bristles, ranged like those that ridge the back

Of chafed wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

*Sam.* I know no spells, use no forbidden arts ;  
My trust is in the living God ; his pardon,  
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant :  
In confidence whereof, I once again  
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,  
By combat to decide whose god is God,  
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

*Har.* With thee, a man condemn'd, a slave in-  
roll'd,  
Due by the law to capital punishment ?  
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

*Sam.* Camest thou for this, vain boaster, to survey  
me,  
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict ?  
Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd ;  
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

*Har.* O Baal-zebub ! can my ears unused  
Hear these dishonours, and not render death ?

*Sam.* No man withholds thee, nothing from thy  
hand  
Fear I incurable ; bring up thy van.

*Har.* This insolence other kind of answer fits.



*Sam.* Go, baffled coward,\* lest I run upon thee,  
 Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
 And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
 Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down  
 To the hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

*Har.* By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament  
 Those braveries in irons loaden on thee. [*Exit.*

### SCENE IX.

*Samson, Danites.*

*Dan.* He will directly to the lords, I fear,  
 And with malicious counsel stir them up,  
 Some way or other, yet further to afflict thee.

*Sam.* He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight  
 Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
 Whether he durst accept the offer or not;  
 And that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.

\* This scene has little tragic merit, but is suited to the taste of a gallery, which would be interested by the superiority of the stout Samson over the insulting and dastardly Harapha. It would have the effect of the ludicrous parts of tragi-comedy.

Much more affliction than already felt  
 They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,  
 If they intend advantage of my labours,  
 The work of many hands, which earns my keeping,  
 With no small profit daily to my owners.

*Dan.* This idol's day hath been to thee no day  
 of rest ;

And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,  
 For I descry this way  
 Some other tending, in his hand  
 A sceptre or quaint staff he bears.  
 By his habit I discern him now  
 A public officer ; and now at hand,

#### SCENE X.

*Samson, Danites : to them, Officer.*

*Off.* Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say ;  
 Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,  
 And now some public proof thereof require,  
 To honour this great feast, and great assembly ;  
 Rise therefore with all speed, and come along.

*Sam.* Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore  
tell them

Our law forbids at their religious rites

My presence : for that cause I cannot come.

*Off.* This answer, be assured, will not content  
them.

*Sam.* Have they not sword-players, and every  
sort

Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners?

Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels

On my refusal, to distress me more,

Or make a game of my calamities?

Return the way thou camest, I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

*Sam.* Can they think me so broken, so debased  
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever

Will condescend to such absurd commands?

To show them feats, and play before their god,

The worst of all indignities, yet on me

Join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

*Off.* My message was imposed on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay : is this thy resolution?

*Sam.* So take it with what speed thy message  
needs.

*Off.* I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

[*Exit.*

*Sam.* Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

### SCENE XI.

*Samson, Danites.*

*Dan.* Consider, Samson; matters now are strain'd  
Up to the highth, whether to hold or break :  
He's gone, and who knows how he may report  
Thy words, by adding fuel to the flame ?

*Sam.* Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression, so requite  
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin,  
By prostituting holy things to idols ;  
A Nazarite in place abominable ?  
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,  
What act more execrably unclean, profane ?

*Dan.* Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines.

*Sam.* Not in their idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawful, to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil power.

*Dan.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts de-  
file not.

*Sam.* But who constrains me to the temple of  
Dagon,  
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.  
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,  
I do it freely, venturing to displease  
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,  
Set God behind; which in his jealousy  
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.  
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee  
Present in temples at idolatrous rites  
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

*Dan.* How thou wilt here come off, surmounts my  
reach.

*Sam.* Be of good courage, I begin to feel [*rises*.  
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose  
To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
I with this messenger will go along;  
If there be aught of presage in the mind,  
This day will be remarkable in my life



By some great act, or of my days the last.

*Dan.* In time thou hast resolved, the man returns.

### SCENE XII.

*Samson, Danites : to them, Officer.*

*Off.* Samson, this second message from our lords  
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,  
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,  
And darest thou, at our sending and command,  
Dispute thy coming? come without delay;  
Or we shall find such engines to assail  
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force.

*Sam.* I could be well content to try their art;  
Yet knowing their advantages too many,  
Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.  
Masters' commands come with a power resistless  
*[with secret irony.*

To such as owe them absolute subjection:  
And for a life, who will not change his purpose?  
(So mutable are all the ways of men)

Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
 Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

*Off.* I praise thy resolution : doff these links.

*Sam.* Brethren, farewell ; your company along  
 I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them.  
 Happen what may, of me expect to hear  
 Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
 Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,  
 The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

[*Exit Samson and Officer.*]

### SCENE XIII.

*Danites.*

*Dan.* Go, and the Holy One  
 Of Israel be thy guide  
 To what may serve his glory best, and spread his  
     name  
 Great among the heathen round ;\*  
 But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste ?

\* I have left out a vast deal of Samson's history in this play, as unnecessary. The French plays contain as much

## SCENE XIV.

*Danites ; to them, Manoah.*

*Man.* Peace with you, brethren ; my inducement hither

Was not at present here to find my son,  
By order of the lords new parted hence ;  
But that which moved my coming now, was chiefly  
To give ye part with me, what hope I have  
With good success to work his liberty.

*Dan.* That hope would much rejoice us to partake.

*Man.* I have attempted one by one the lords  
To accept of ransome for my son their pris'ner.  
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,  
That part most revered Dagon and his priests :  
Others, more moderate seeming, but their aim  
Private reward, for which both god and state

useless history as any. The English in general are faultless in this respect.

They easily would set to sale: a third,  
 More generous far and civil, who confess'd  
 They had enough revenged, having reduced  
 Their foe to misery, beneath their fears ;—  
 What noise or shout was that ? it tore the sky.\*

*Dan.* Doubtless, the people shouting to behold  
 Their once great dread, captive and blind, before  
 them.

*Man.* His ransome, if my whole inheritance  
 May compass it, shall willingly be paid.  
 It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,  
 And view him sitting in the house, ennobled  
 With all those high exploits by him achieved,  
 And on his shoulders waving down those locks  
 That of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd ;  
 And I persuade me, God had not permitted  
 His strength again to grow up with his hair,  
 Garrison'd round about him like a camp  
 Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose  
 To use him further yet in some great service.

\* In shortening these speeches I have been unable to leave much time for Samson to do what is afterwards related. One must at least suppose the temple at the back of the prison, and himself perhaps led through a door by the shortest way.

*Dan.* Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem  
vain,

Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon  
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,  
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds, and—O what  
noise !

Mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that !  
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

*Dan.* Noise call you it, or universal groan ?  
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd !  
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,  
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

*Man.* Of ruin indeed methought I heard the  
noise :

Oh it continues ; they have slain my son !

*Dan.* Thy son is rather slaying them, that out-  
cry

From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

*Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be.  
What shall we do, stay here, or run and see ?

*Dan.* Best keep together here, lest running  
thither

We unawares run into danger's mouth.



This evil on the Philistines is fallen ;  
 From whom could else a general cry be heard ?  
 The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,  
 From other hands we need not much to fear.  
 What if his sight by miracle restored,  
 He now be dealing dole among his foes ?  
 And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way ?

*Man.* That were a joy presumptuous to be  
 thought.

#### SCENE XV.

*Manoab, Danites : to them Messenger.*

*Mes.* O whither shall I run, or which way fly  
 The sight of this so horrid spectacle,  
 Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold ?  
 For dire imagination still pursues me.  
 But providence, or instinct of nature, seems  
 To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
 To thee first, reverend Manoah, and to these

My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining.

*Man.* The accident was loud, and here before  
thee

With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not.

*Mes.* It would burst forth, but I recover breath  
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.—  
Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,  
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fallen.

*Man.* Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not  
saddest

The desolation of a hostile city.

*Mes.* Feed on that first, there may in grief be  
surfeit.

Ah Manoah, I refrain too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too soon ;  
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption  
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

*Man.* Suspense in news is torture, speak them  
out.

*Mes.* Take then the worst in brief, Samson is  
dead.

*Man.* The worst, indeed ; O all my hopes de-  
feated

To free him hence ! but death, who sets all free,  
 Hath paid his ransome now, and full discharge.  
 Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,  
 How died he ? death to life is crown or shame.  
 All by him fell, thou sayst, by whom fell he,  
 What glorious hand gave Samson his death's  
 wound ?

*Mes.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.  
 He patient but undaunted where they led him,  
 Came to the place, and what was set before him,  
 Which without help of eye might be assay'd,  
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd,  
 All with incredible stupendous force.  
 At length, for intermission sake, they led him  
 Between the pillars ; he his guide requested,  
 As over tired, to let him lean awhile,  
 With both his arms on those two massy pillars  
 That to the arched roof gave main support.  
 He unsuspecting led him ; which when Samson  
 Felt in his arms, with head awhile inclined,  
 And eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who pray'd.  
 At last with head erect, thus cried aloud,  
 Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed,

I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying;  
 Now of my own accord such other trial  
 I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,  
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.  
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves, he bow'd,  
 He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew  
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder  
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,  
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only  
 Of this but each Philistian city round,  
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.  
 Samson with these immix'd, inevitably  
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself.\*

*Dan.* O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!  
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd  
 The work for which thou wast foretold  
 To Israel, and now liest victorious

\* I had already reduced this speech in such a manner, that the Messenger might describe only what would allow him the assistance of gesture, when I first saw the picture from a design of Mr. Westall's, in the Milton printed at the Shakspeare Press. The Messenger is there represented as imitating the

Among thy slain, self-kill'd,  
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold  
 Of dire necessity.

*Man.* Come, come, no time for lamentation now,  
 Nor much more cause ; Samson hath quit himself  
 Like Samson, and heroicly hath finish'd  
 A life heroic, on his enemies  
 Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning.  
 Let us go find the body where it lies  
 Soak'd in his enemies' blood, and from the stream  
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off  
 The clotted gore. I with what speed the while  
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,  
 To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend  
 Home to his father's house : there will I build him  
 A monument, and plant it round with shade  
 Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,

attitude of Samson in performing what he relates ; and has thus enabled us to conceive a similar catastrophe, not wholly destitute of the effect of one witnessed by the spectator. It may be imagined I was pleased at this strong additional argument, of the close connection of history-painting and the drama.



With all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd  
 In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.  
 Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
 And from his memory inflame their breasts  
 To matchless valour, and adventures high :  
 The virgins also shall on feastful days  
 Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing  
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,

## SONG.

*All is best, though we oft doubt  
 What the unsearchable dispose  
 Of highest Widsom brings about,  
 And ever best found in the close,  
 Oft he seems to hide his face,  
 But unexpectedly returns,  
 And to his faithful champion bath in place  
 Bore witness gloriously : whence Gaza mourns,  
 And all that band them to resist  
 His uncontrollable intent ;  
 His servants be, with new acquist*

*Of true experience, from this great event  
With peace and consolation bath dismiss'd,  
And calm of mind all passion spent.\**

*[Exeunt.]*

\* I think Johnson's excellent criticism on this work only severe in supposing, that it contained no more than the substance of one act. I might have shortened, but have left it of the length of two. I must confess, I think it inferior both to *Lycidas*, and the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, though still one of Milton's valuable works. Those literary men who see *Comus* acted with greater pleasure from owing their amusement to the mind of Milton, might on that account, as well as from the merits of this drama, wish to see its effect in representation.



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**THE SILENT WOMAN.**

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## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MOROSE, *a Gentleman that loves no noise.*

DAUPH. EUGENIE, *a Knight, his Nephew.*

CLERIMONT, *a Gentleman, his Friend.*

TRUEWIT, *another Friend.*

EPICÆNE, *a young Gentleman, supposed the Silent Woman.*

JOHN DAW, *a Knight, her Servant.*

AMOROUS LA-FOOLE, *a Knight also.*

THOMAS OTTER, *a Land and Sea Captain.*

CUTBEARD, *a Barber.*

MUTE, *one of Morose's Servants.*

MAD. HAUGHTY, MAD. CENTAURE, *and Mrs.*

MAVIS, *Ladies Collegiates.*

MRS. TRUSTY, *the Lady Haughty's Woman.*

MRS. OTTER, *the Captain's Wife.*

*Pretenders.*

*Parson, Pages, Servants.*

*The SCENE, London.*



# THE SILENT WOMAN.

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## ACT I. SCENE I.

*Clerimont's House.*

*Clerimont, Boy*

LINE 2.

CLERIMONT.

**H**A' you got the song yet perfect, I ga' you, boy?  
[*he comes out, making himself ready.*]

*Boy.* Yes, sir.

\* I am furnished with a precedent for numbering the lines of prose, in the comic scenes of Bell's Shakspeare. Without this, I should be apprehensive of objections, besides what arise from the *greater* difficulty of thus ascertaining the length of prose works ; their lines varying with the size of the print and volumes. But let it be recollected, how much more exactly a painter adheres to the rule of observing a certain boundary to his work, than I would wish any writer to do. And have not critics thought it necessary to take account of the number of books, and the length of epic poems, supposing that they might be too much extended ? The poet also, must see the size of his canvas and figures mutually adapted to each other.

*Cler.* Let me hear it.

*Boy.* You shall, sir.

SCENE II.

*To them, Truewit.*

*Tru.* Why, here's the man that can melt away his time, and never feels it! What between his mistress abroad, and his engle at home, high fare, soft lodging, fine clothes, and his fiddle; he thinks the hours ha' no wings, or the day no post-horse. Well, sir gallant, were you struck with the plague this minute, or condemned to any capital punishment to-morrow, you would begin then to think, and value every particle o' your time, esteem it at the true rate, and give all for't.

*Cler.* Why, what should a man do?

*Tru.* Why, nothing; or that, which when 'tis done, is as idle. Hearken after the next horse-race, or hunting match, lay wagers, speak aloud, that my lords may hear you; visit my ladies at night, and be able to give 'em the character of every bowler or better o' the

green. These be the things wherein your fashionable men exercise themselves ; and I for company.

*Cler.* Nay, if I have thy authority, I'll not leave yet. Come, the other are considerations, when we come to have grey heads, and weak hams, moist eyes, and shrunk members. We'll think on 'em then ; then we'll pray and fast.

*Tru.* And destine only that time of age to goodness, which our want of ability will not let us employ in evil ?

*Cler.* Why, then 'tis time enough.

*Tru.* Yes ; as if a man should sleep all the term, and think to effect this business the last day. O, Clerimont, see but our common disease ! with what justice can we complain, that great men will not look upon us, nor be at leisure to give our affairs such dispatch as we expect, when we will never do it to ourselves : nor hear, nor regard ourselves.

*Cler.* Foh, thou hast read Plutarch's morals, now, or some such tedious fellow ; and it shows so vilely with thee : 'fore God, 'twill spoil thy wit utterly. Talk to me of pins, and feathers, and ladies, and rushes, and such things : and leave this Stoicite alone, till thou mak'st sermons.

*Tru.* Well, sir; if it will not take, I have learn'd to lose as little of my kindness as I can. I'll do good to no man against his will, certainly. When were you at the college?

*Cler.* What college?

*Tru.* A new foundation, sir, here i' the town, of ladies, that call themselves the collegiates; that give entertainment to all the wits, and braveries o' the time, as they call 'em: cry down, or up, what they like, or dislike in a brain or a fashion, with most masculine, or rather hermaphroditical authority; and every day gain to their college some new probationer.

*Cler.* Who is the president?

*Tru.* The grave and youthful matron, the lady Haughty.

*Cler.* A pox of her autumnal face, her piec'd beauty: there's no man can be admitted till she be ready, now-a-days, till she has painted and perfumed, wash'd, and scour'd, but the boy here. I have made a song, I pr'ythee hear it, o' the subject.

SONG.

*Still to be neat, still to be dress'd,  
As you were going to a feast ;  
Still to be powder'd, still perfum'd ;  
Lady, it is to be presumed,  
Though art's bid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.*

*Give me a look, give me a face,  
That makes simplicity a grace ;  
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free :  
Such sweet neglect more taketh me,  
Than all the adulteries of art ;  
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart."\**

*Tru.* And a wise lady will keep a guard always upon the place, that she may do things securely. I once followed a rude fellow into a chamber, where the poor madam, for haste, and troubled, snatch'd at

\* Here is an opportunity afforded of employing a young singer of talents.



her peruke to cover her baldness ; and put it on the wrong way.

*Cler.* O prodigy !

*Tru.* And the unconscionable knave held her in compliment an hour with that reversed face, when I still look'd when she should talk from the t'other side.

*Cler.* Why, thou should'st ha' reliev'd her.

*Tru.* No faith, I let her alone, as we'll let this argument, if you please, and pass to another. When saw you Dauphine Eugenie ?

*Cler.* Not these three days. Shall we go to him this morning ? he is very melancholic, I hear.

*Tru.* Sick o' the uncle, is he ? I met that stiff piece of formality, his uncle, yesterday, with a huge turban of night caps on his head, buckled over his ears.

*Cler.* O, that's his custom, when he walks abroad. He can endure no noise, man.

*Tru.* So I have heard. But is the disease so ridiculous in him as it is made ? They say he has been upon divers treaties with the fish-wives, and orange-women ; and articles propounded between them : marry, the chimney sweepers will not be drawn in.

*Cler.* No, nor the broom-men : they stand out

stiffly. He cannot endure a costard-monger, he swoons if he hear one.

*Tru.* Methinks a smith should be ominous.

*Cler.* Or any hammer-man. A brazier is not suffer'd to dwell in the parish, nor an armorer. He would have hang'd a pewterer's 'prentice once, for being o' that trade.

*Tru.* A trumpet should fright him terribly, or the hau'boys.

*Cler.* Out of his senses. The waights of the city have a pension of him, not to come near that ward. This youth practiced on him one night like the bell-man; and never left till he had brought him down to the door, with a long sword; and there left him, flourishing with the air.

*Boy.* Why, sir, he hath chosen a street to lie in, so narrow at both ends, that it will receive no coaches, nor carts, nor any of these common noises: a fencer marching to his prize, had his drum most tragically run through, for taking that street in his way, at my request.

*Tru.* A good wag. How does he for the bells?

*Cler.* The perpetuity of ringing has made him devise a room with double walls, and treble ceilings; the

windows close shut, and caulk'd; and there he lives by candlelight. He turn'd away a man last week, for having a pair of new shoes that creak'd. And this fellow waits on him now in tennis-court socks, or slippers soal'd with wool: and they talk each to other in a trunk.\* See, who comes here?

### SCENE III.

*Dauphine, Truewit; to them, Clerimont.*

*Dauph.* How now! what ail you, sirs? dumb?

*Tru.* Struck into stone, almost, I am here, with tales o' thine uncle! There was never such a prodigy heard of.

*Dauph.* I would you would once lose this subject, my masters, for my sake. They are such as you are,

\* I think it will be impossible to defend the character of Morose as comic; but considered as farcical, it is excellently drawn. One may imagine some such a character naturally drawn, (for instance a literary person used to study and privacy, or a fop with delicate nerves,) which might strike by means of contrast not carried too far.

that have brought me into that predicament I am with him.

*Tru.* How is that?

*Daupb.* Marry, that he will disinherit me. No more. He thinks, I, and my company, are authors of all the ridiculous acts told of him.

*Tru.* I would be the author of more to vex him; that purpose deserves it: it gives thee law of plaguing him. I'll tell thee what I would do. Disinherit thee! he cannot, man. Art not thou next of blood, and his sister's son?

*Daupb.* But he will thrust me out of it, he vows, and marry.

*Tru.* How! that's a more portent. Can he endure no noise, and will venture on a wife?

*Cler.* Yes, why thou art a stranger, it seems, to his best trick, yet. He has employ'd a fellow this half year all over England to hearken him out a dumb woman; be she of any form, or any quality, so she be able to bear children: her silence is dowry enough, he says.

*Tru.* But I trust to God he has found none.

*Cler.* No, but he has heard of one that's lodg'd i' the next street to him, who is exceedingly soft-

spoken ; thrifty of her speech ; that spends but six words a-day. And her he's about now, and shall have her.

*Tru.* Is't possible ! who's his agent i' the business ?

*Cler.* Marry, a barber ; one Cutbeard, an honest fellow, one that tells Dauphine all here.

*Tru.* Why, you oppress me with wonder ! a woman, and a barber, and love no noise !

*Cler.* Yes, faith. The fellow trims him silently, and has not the knack with his sheers or his fingers ; and that continency in a barber he thinks so eminent a virtue, as it has made him chief of his counsel.

*Tru.* Is the barber to be seen ? or the wench ?

*Cler.* Yes, that they are.

*Tru.* I pry'thee, Dauphine, let's go thither.

*Dauph.* I have some business now : I cannot i' faith :

*Tru.* You shall have no business shall make you neglect this, sir : we'll make her talk, believe it ; or if she will not, we can give out, at least, so much as shall interrupt the treaty : we will break it. Thou art bound in conscience, when he suspects thee without cause, to torment him.

*Dauph.* Not I, by any means. I'll give no suf-



frage to't. He shall never have that plea against me, that I opposed the least phant'sie of his. Let it lie upon my stars to be guilty, I'll be innocent.

*Tru.* Yes, and be poor, and beg; do, innocent: when some groom of his has got him an heir, or this barber, if he himself cannot. Innocent! I pr'ythee, Ned, where lies she? let him be innocent still.

*Cler.* Why, right over against the barber's; in the house where sir John Daw lies.

*Tru.* You do not mean to confound me!

*Cler.* Why?

*Tru.* Does he that would marry her know so much?

*Cler.* I cannot tell.

*Tru.* 'Twere enough of imputation to her with him.

*Cler.* Why?

*Tru.* The only talking sir i' the town! Jack Daw! An' he teach her not to speak—God b' w' you. I have some business too.

*Cler.* Will you not go thither then?

*Tru.* Not with the danger to meet Daw, for mine ears.

*Cler.* Why? I thought you two had been upon very good terms.

*Tru.* Yes, of keeping distance.

*Cler.* They say, he is a very good scholar.

*Tru.* And he says it first. A pox on him, a fellow that pretends only to learning, buys titles, and nothing else of books in him.

*Cler.* The world reports him to be very learned.

*Tru.* I am sorry the world should so conspire to belie him.

*Cler.* Good faith, I have heard very good things come from him.

*Tru.* You may. There's none so desperately ignorant, to deny that: would they were his own. God b' w' you, gentlemen.

*Cler.* This is very abrupt. [Exit *Truewit*.

SCENE IV.

*Dauphine, Clerimont, Boy.*

*Dauph.* Come, you are a strange open man, to tell every thing thus.

*Cler.* Why, believe it, *Dauphine*, *Truewit*'s a very honest fellow.

*Dauph.* I think no other: but this frank nature of his is not for secrets.

*Cler.* Nay then, you are mistaken, Dauphine: I know where he has been well trusted, and discharg'd the trust very truly, and heartily.

*Dauph.* I contend not, Ned; but with the fewer a business is carried, it is ever the safer. Now we are alone, if you'll go thither, I am for you.

*Cler.* When were you there?

*Dauph.* Last night: and such sport! Boccace never thought of the like. Daw does nothing but court her; and the wrong way. He would lie with her, and praises her modesty; desires that she would talk, and be free, and commends her silence in verses; which he reads, and swears are the best that ever man made. Then rails at his fortunes, stamps, and mutinies why he is not made a counsellor, and call'd to affairs of state. We are invited to dinner together, he and I, by one that came thither to him, sir La-Foole.

*Cler.* O, that's a precious mannikin.

*Dauph.* Do you know him?

*Cler.* And he will know you too, if e'er he saw you but once, though you should meet him at church in the midst of prayers. He will salute a judge upon

the bench, and a bishop in the pulpit, a lawyer when he is pleading at the bar, and a lady when she is dancing in a mask, and put her out. He does give plays, and suppers, and invites his guests to 'em, aloud out of his window, as they ride by in coaches. He has a lodging in the Strand for the purpose; or to watch when ladies are gone to the china-houses, or the Exchange, that he may meet 'em by chance, and give 'em presents, some two or three hundred pounds worth of toys, to be laugh'd at. He is never without a spare banquet, or sweetmeats in his chamber, for their women to alight at, and come up to for a bait.

*Dauph.* Excellent! what is his Christian name?  
I ha' forgot.

*Cler.* Sir Amorous La-Foole.

*Boy.* The gentleman is here that owns that name.

*Cler.* 'Heart, he's come to invite me to dinner, I hold my life.

*Dauph.* Like enough: pr'ythee let's ha' him up.

*Cler.* Boy, marshal him. [Exit Boy.

SCENE V.

*Dauphine, Clerimont.*

*Cler.* I'll make him tell us his pedigree, now ; and what meat he has to dinner ; and who are his guests ; and the whole course of his fortunes with a breath.

SCENE VI.

*The same ; to them, La-Foole.*

*La-F.* Save, dear sir Dauphine, honour'd master Clerimont.

*Cler.* Sir Amorous, you have very much honored my lodging with your presence.

*La-F.* Good faith, it is a fine lodging ! almost as delicate a lodging as mine.

*Cler.* Not so, sir.

*La-F.* Excuse me, sir, if it were i' the Strand, I assure you. I am come, master Clerimont, to entreat



you to wait upon two or three ladies, to dinner, to-day.

*Cler.* Where hold you your feast?

*La-F.* At Tom Otter's, sir.

*Daupb.* Tom Otter? what's he?

*La-F.* Captain Otter, sir; he is a kind of gamester, but he has had command both by sea and by land.

*Daupb.* O, then he is *animal amphibium*?

*La-F.* Sir, his wife was the rich china-woman, that the courtiers visited so often; that gave the rare entertainment. She commands all at home.

*Cler.* Then she is Captain Otter.

*La-F.* You say very well, sir; she is my kinswoman, a La-Foole by the mother-side, and will invite any great ladies for my sake.

*Daupb.* Not of the La-Fooles of Essex?

*La-F.* No, sir, the La-Fooles of London.

*Cler.* Now, he's in. [Apart.

*La-F.* They all come out of our house, the La-Fooles of the north, the La-Fooles of the west, the La-Fooles of the east and south—we are as ancient a family as any is in Europe—but I myself am descended lineally of the French La-Fooles—and, we do bear for our coat yellow, or *or*; checker'd *azure*, and

*gules*, and some three or four colours more, which is a very noted coat, and has, sometimes, been solemnly worn by divers nobility of our house—but let that go, antiquity is not respected now—I had a brace of fat does sent me, gentlemen, and half a dozen of pheasants, a dozen or two of godwits, and some other fowl, which I would have eaten while they are good, and in good company—there will be a great lady or two, my lady Haughty, my lady Centaure, mistress Doll Mavis—and they come o' purpose, to see the silent gentlewoman, mistress Epiccene, that honest sir John Daw has promis'd to bring thither—and then, mistress Trusty, my lady's woman, will be there too, and this honourable knight, sir Dauphine, with yourself, master Clerimont—and we'll be very merry, and have fiddlers, and dance—I have been a mad wag in my time, and have spent some crowns since I was a page in court, to my lord Lofty, and after, my lady's gentleman-usher, who got me knighted in Ireland, since it pleased my elder brother to die—I had as fair a gold jerkin on that day, as any worn in the island voyage, or at Cadiz, none disprais'd, and I came over in it hither, shew'd myself to my friends in court; and after went down to my tenants in the country, and surveyed my lands,

let new leases, took their money, spent it in the eye o' the land here, upon ladies—and now I can take up at my pleasure

*Dauph.* Can you take up ladies, sir?

*Cler.* O, let him breathe, he has not recover'd.

[*Apart.*

*Dauph.* Would I were your half, in that commodity.

*La-F.* No, sir, excuse me: I meant money, which can take up any thing. I have another guest or two, to invite, and say as much to, gentlemen. I'll take my leave abruptly, in hope you will not fail——Your servant.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE VII.

*Dauphine, Clerimont.*

*Dauph.* We will not fail you, sir precious La-Foole; but she shall, that your ladies come to see: if I have credit, afore sir Daw.

*Cler.* Did you ever hear such a wind-sucker, as this?

*Dauph.* Or such a rook as the other! that will betray his mistress to be seen. Come, 'tis time we prevented it.

*Cler.* Go.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

*Morose's House.*

*Morose, Mute.*

*Mor.* Cannot I, yet, find out a more compendious method, than by this trunk, to save my servants the labour of speech, and mine ears the discord of sounds? Let me see: all discourses but my own afflict me, they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome. Is it not possible, that thou should'st answer me by signs, and I apprehend thee, fellow? Speak not, though I question you. You have taken the ring off from the street door, as I bade you? answer me not by speech, but by silence; unless it be otherwise: (—) [*at the breaches still the fellow makes legs or signs.*] very good. And you have fastened on a thick quilt, or flock-bed, on the outside of the door; that if they knock with their daggers, or with brick-bats, they can make no noise? but with your leg, your answer, unless it be otherwise: (—) very good. This is not only fit modesty in a servant, but good state and discretion in a master.



And you have been with Cutbeard the barber, to have him come to me? (——) good. And he will come presently? answer me not but with your leg, unless it be otherwise: if it be otherwise, shake your head, or shrug. (——) So. Your Italian and Spaniard are wise in these! and it is a frugal and comely gravity. How long will it be ere Cutbeard come? stay, if an hour, hold up your whole hand; if half an hour, two fingers; if a quarter, one; (——) good: half a quarter? 'tis well. And have you given him a key, to come in without knocking? (——) good. And, is the lock oil'd, and the hinges, to-day? (——) good. And the quilting of the stairs no where worn out and bare? (——) very good. I see, by much doctrine, it may be effected; stand by. The Turk, in this divine discipline, is admirable, exceeding all the potentates of the earth: still waited on by mutes; and all his commands so executed; yea, even in the war (as I have heard) and in his marches, most of his charges and directions given by signs, and with silence: an exquisite art! and I am heartily ashamed, and angry oftentimes, that the princes of Christendom should suffer a barbarian to transcend 'em in so high a point of felicity. I will practice it hereafter. [*born*



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*without.*] How now? oh! oh! what villain? what prodigy of mankind is that? look. [*Exit Mute.*

## SCENE II.

*Morose.*

*Mor.* Oh! cut his throat, cut his throat: what murderer, hell-hound, devil, can this be?

[*born without again.*

## SCENE III.

*Morose; to him, Mute.*

*Mute.* It is a post from the court——

*Mor.* Out, rogue, and must thou blow thy horn too?

*Mute.* Alas, it is a post from the court, sir, that says, he must speak with you, pain of death——

*Mor.* Pain of thy life, be silent.

## SCENE IV.

*The same ; to them, Truewit.*

*Tru.* Your friends at court commend 'em to you, sir——

(*Mor.* O men ! O manners ! was there ever such an impudence ?)

*Tru.* And are extremely solicitous for you, sir.

*Mor.* How then !

*Tru.* Marry, your friends do wonder, sir, the Thames being so near, wherein you may drown, so handsomely ; or London bridge, at a low fall, with a fine leap to hurry you down the stream ; or, such a delicate steeple i' the town as Bow, to vault from ; or, a braver height, as Paul's ; or if you affected to do it nearer home, and a shorter way, an excellent garret window into the street ; and desire that you would take a little sublimate, and go out of the world like a rat, than follow this goblin Matrimony. Alas, sir, do you ever think to find a chaste wife in these times ? now ? when there are so many masks, plays,

Puritan parlees, mad folks, and other strange sights to be seen daily, private, and public? If you had liv'd in king Etheldred's time, sir, or Edward the Confessor, you might, perhaps, have found one in some cold country hamlet, then, a dull frosty wench, would have been contented with one man: now, they will as soon be pleas'd with one leg, or one eye. I'll tell you, sir, the monstrous hazards you shall run with a wife.

*Mor.* Good sir! have I ever cozen'd any friends of yours of their land? bought their possessions? taken forfeit of their mortgage? begg'd a reversion from 'em? bastarded their issue? what have I done, that may deserve this?

*Tru.* Nay, suffer valiantly, sir, for I must tell you all the perils that you are obnoxious to. If she be fair, young, and vegetous, no sweetmeats ever drew more flies; all the yellow doublets and great roses i' the town will be there. If foul and crooked, she'll be with them, and buy those doublets and roses, sir. If rich, and that you marry her dowry, not her, she'll reign in your house, as imperious as a widow. If noble, all her kindred will be your tyrants. If fruitful, as proud as May, and humorous as April; if learned, there was never such a parrot. You begin

to sweat, sir? But this is not half, i' faith: you may do your pleasure, notwithstanding, as I said before, I come not to persuade you.

*Mor.* O, what is my sin! what is my sin!

*Tru.* Then, if you love your wife, or rather dote on her, sir; O, how she'll torture you! and take pleasure i' your torments! you shall lie with her but when she lists; she will not hurt her beauty, her complexion; or it must be for that jewel, or that pearl, when she does; every half hour's pleasure must be bought anew, and with the same pain and charge you woo'd her at first. Then you must keep what servants she please; what company she will; that friend must not visit you without her license; and him she loves most, she will seem to hate eagerliest, to decline your jealousy; or, feign to be jealous of you first; and for that cause go live with her she-friend, that can instruct her in all the mysteries of writing letters, corrupting servants, taming spies; where she must have that rich gown for such a great day; a new one for the next; a richer for the third; be serv'd in silver; have the chamber fill'd with a succession of grooms, footmen, ushers, and other messengers; besides embroiderers, jewellers, tire-women, semsters,

feather-men, perfumers; whilst she feels not how the land drops away, nor the acres melt; nor foresees the change, when the mercer has your woods for her velvets.

*Mor.* Gentle sir, ha' you done? ha' you had your pleasure o' me?

*Tru.* Yes, sir: God b' w' you, sir. [*going.*] One thing more (which I had almost forgot.) This too, with whom you are to marry, may have made a conveyance of her virginity aforehand, as your wise widows do of their states, before they marry, in trust to some friend, sir: who can tell? or if she have not done it yet, she may do, upon the wedding-day, or night before, and antedate you cuckold. The like has been heard of in nature. 'Tis no devis'd impossible thing, sir. God b' w' you.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

*Morose, Mute.*

*Mor.* Come, ha' me to my chamber: but first shut the door. O, shut the door, shut the door: is he come again? [*the horn again.*



SCENE VI.

*The same ; to them, Cutbeard.*

*Cut.* 'Tis I, sir, your barber.

*Mor.* O Cutbeard, Cutbeard, Cutbeard ! here has been a cut-throat with me ; help me into my bed, and give me physic with thy counsel.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.

*Sir John Daw's House.*

*Daw, Clerimont, Dauphine, Epicæne.*

*Daw.* Nay, an' she will, let her refuse at her own charges : 'tis nothing to me, gentlemen. But she will not be invited to the like feasts or guests every day.

*Cler.* [*loud.*] O, by no means, she may not re-

fuse—to stay at home, if you love your reputation :  
'Slight, you are invited thither o' purpose to be  
seen, and laugh'd at. [*Apart.*

*Daupb.* You shall not go ; let him be laugh'd at  
in your stead, for not bringing you. [*Apart.*

*Cler.* He will suspect us, talk aloud. 'Pray, [*loud.*]  
mistress Epicœne, let's see your verses, we have sir  
John Daw's leave : do not conceal your servant's  
merit, and your own glories.

*Daw.* Shew 'em, shew 'em, mistress, I dare own  
'em. Nay, I'll read 'em myself, too : an author  
must recite his own works. It is a madrigal of  
modesty.

“ Modest, and fair, for fair and good are near

“ Neighbours, how e'er.”—

*Daupb.* Very good.

*Cler.* Is't not ?

*Daw.* “ No noble virtue ever was alone,

“ But two in one.”

*Daupb.* Excellent !

*Cler.* That again, I pray, sir John.

*Daupb.* It has something in't like rare wit and  
sense.

*Cler.* Peace.

*Daw.* "No noble virtue ever was alone,

"But two in one.

"Then, when I praise sweet modesty, I praise

"Bright beauty's rays:

"And having prais'd both beauty and modesty,

"I have prais'd thee."

*Dauph.* Admirable!

*Cler.* How it chimes, and cries tink i'the close,  
divinely!

*Dauph.* 'Tis Seneca.

*Cler.* No, I think 'tis Plutarch.

*Daw.* They are mine own imaginations, by that light. I wonder those fellows have such credit with gentlemen!

*Cler.* They are very grave authors.

*Daw.* Grave asses! mere essayists! a few loose sentences, and that's all. A man would talk so his whole age: I do utter as good things every hour, if they were collected and observ'd, as either of 'em.

*Dauph.* Indeed, sir John?

*Cler.* He must needs, living among the wits and braveries too.

*Dauph.* And being president of 'em, as he is.

*Daw.* There's Aristotle, a mere common-place fellow ; Plato, a discourser ; Thucydides, and Livie, tedious and dry ; Tacitus, an entire knot ; sometimes worth the untying, very seldom.

*Cler.* What do you think of the poets, sir John ?

*Daw.* Not worthy to be nam'd for authors. Homer, an old tedious prolix ass, talks of curriers, and chines of beef. Virgil of dunging of land, and bees. Horace of I know not what.

*Cler.* I think so. [*Apart.*

*Daw.* And so, Pindar, Lycophron, Anacreon, Catullus, Seneca the tragedian, Lucan, Propertius, Tibullus, Martial, Juvenal, Ausonius, Statius, Politian, Valerius Flaccus, and the rest——

*Cler.* What a sackful of their names he has got !

[*Apart.*

*Dauph.* And how he pours 'em out ! [*Apart.*]—  
'Fore God, you have a simple learn'd servant, lady, in titles.

*Daw.* I have written somewhat of her silence, too.

*Cler.* Your verses, good sir John.

*Daw.* " Silence in woman is like speech in man ;

" Deny't who can."



*Dauph.* Not I, believe it: your reason, sir.

*Daw.* "Nor is't a tale,

"That female vice should be a virtue male,

"Or masculine vice a female virtue be:

"You shall it see,

"Prov'd with increase;

"I know to speak, and she to hold her peace;"  
Do you conceive me, gentlemen?

*Dauph.* No, faith; how mean you with increase, sir John?

*Daw.* Why, with increase is, when I court her for the common cause of mankind, and she says nothing but *consentire videtur*; and in time is *gravida*.

*Cler.* See, here's Truewit again.

### SCENE VIII.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Daw, [attentively reading his verses.] Epicæne: to them, Truewit.*

*Cler.* Where hast thou been?

*Tru.* I have been with thy virtuous uncle, and have broke the match.



*Daupb.* You ha' not, I hope.

*Tru.* Yes, faith; if ever Gorgon were seen in the shape of a woman, he hath seen her in my description. I have put him off o' that scent for ever. Why do you not applaud and adore me, sirs? why stand you mute? are you stupid? you are not worthy o' the benefit.

*Daupb.* Did not I tell you? Mischief!

*Cler.* I would you had plac'd this benefit somewhere else.

*Tru.* Why so?

*Cler.* 'Slight, you have done the most inconsiderate, rash, weak thing, that ever man did to his friend.

*Daupb.* Friend! if the most malicious enemy I have, had studied to inflict an injury upon me, it could not be a greater.

*Tru.* Wherein, for God's sake? Gentlemen, come to yourselves again.

*Daupb.* But I presag'd thus much afore to you.

*Cler.* Would my lips had been solder'd when I spake on't. 'Slight, what mov'd you to be thus impertinent?

*Daupb.* 'Fore heav'n, you have undone me.

That which I have plotted for, and been maturing now these four months, you have blasted in a minute: now I am lost, I may speak. This gentlewoman was lodg'd here by me o' purpose, and, to be put upon my uncle, hath profess'd this obstinate silence for my sake, being my entire friend, and one that for the requital of such a fortune as to marry him, would have made me very ample conditions; where now, all my hopes are utterly miscarried by this unlucky accident.

*Cler.* Thus 'tis, when a man will be ignorantly officious, do services, and not know his why: I wonder what courteous itch possess'd you!

*Daupb.* Faith, you may forgive it best; 'twas your cause principally.

*Cler.* I know it, would it had not.

### SCENE IX.

*Clerimont, Truewit, Daupbine, Daw, Epicæne; to them, Cutbeard.*

*Daupb.* How now, Cutbeard; what news?

*Cut.* The best, the happiest that ever was, sir.

There has been a mad gentleman with your uncle this morning (I think this be the gentleman), that has almost talk'd him out of his wits, with threatening him from marriage——

*Daupb.* On, I pr'ythee.

*Cut.* And your uncle, sir, he thinks 'twas done by your procurement; therefore he will see the party you wot of presently: and if he like her, he says, and that she be so inclining to dumb, as I have told him, he swears he will marry her to-day, instantly, and not defer it a minute longer.

*Daupb.* Excellent! beyond our expectation!

*Tru.* Beyond our expectation! By this light, I knew it would be thus.

*Daupb.* Nay, sweet Truewit, forgive me.

*Tru.* No, I was ignorantly officious, impertinent: this was the absurd, weak part.

*Cler.* Wilt thou ascribe that to merit now, was mere fortune?

*Tru.* Fortune! mere providence. Fortune had not a finger in't. I saw it must necessarily in nature fall out so: my genius is never false to me in these things. Shew me how it could be otherwise.

*Daupb.* Nay, gentlemen, 'tis well now ; do you two entertain sir John Daw with discourse, while I send her away with instructions.

*Tru.* I'll be acquainted with her first, by your favour.

*Cler.* Master Truewit, lady, a friend of ours.

*Tru.* I am sorry I have not known you sooner, lady, to celebrate this rare virtue of your silence.

[Exit *Dauphine*, *Epicœne*, and *Cutbeard*.

### SCENE X.

*Clerimont*, *Truewit* ; *Daw*, coming forward.

*Tru.* Jack Daw, save you ; when saw you La-Foole ?

*Daw.* Not since last night, master Truewit.

*Tru.* That's a miracle ! I thought you two had been inseparable.

*Daw.* He's gone to invite his guests.

*Tru.* God so ! 'tis true ! what a false memory have I ! I am one : I met him ev'n now, upon that he calls his delicate fine black horse, rid into foam



with posting from place to place, and person to person, to give 'em the cue——There was never poor captain took more pains at a muster to shew men, than he, at this meal, to shew friends.

*Daw.* Is mistress Epicæne gone ?

*Cler.* Gone afore, with sir Dauphine, I warrant, to the place.

*Tru.* Gone afore ! that were a manifest injury, a disgrace and a half ; to refuse him at such a festival time as this, being a bravery, and a wit too.

*Cler.* Tut, he'll swallow it like cream : he's better read in *Jure civili*, than to esteem any thing a disgrace, is offer'd him from a mistress.

*Daw.* Nay, let her e'en go ; she shall sit alone, and be dumb in her chamber a week together, for John Daw, I warrant her : does she refuse me ?

*Cler.* No, sir, do not take it so to heart : she does not refuse you, but a little neglects you. Good faith, Truewit, you were to blame, to put it into his head, that she does refuse him.

*Tru.* Sir, she does refuse him palpably, however



you mince it. An' I were as he, I would swear to speak ne'er a word to her to-day for't.

*Daw.* By this light, no more I will not.

*Tru.* Nor to any body else, sir.

*Daw.* Nay, I will not say so, gentlemen.

*Cler.* It had been an excellent happy condition for the company, if you could have drawn him to it.

[*Apart.*

*Daw.* I'll be very melancholic, i'faith.

*Cler.* As a dog, if I were as you, sir John.

*Daw.* Will you go, gentlemen?

*Cler.* Nay, you must walk alone, if you be right melancholic, sir John.

*Tru.* Yes, sir, we'll dog you, we'll follow you afar off.

[*Exit Daw.*

## SCENE XI.

*Clerimont, Truewit.*

*Cler.* Was there ever such a two yards of knight-hood measur'd out by time, to be sold to laughter?

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Let's follow him: but first let's go to Dauphine, he's hovering about the house to hear what news.

*Tru.* Content.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE XII.

*Morose's House.*

*Morose, Epicæne, Cutbeard, Mute.*

*Mor.* Welcome, Cutbeard; draw near with your fair charge: and in her ear softly entreat her to unmask (——) So. Is the door shut? (——) Enough. Now, Cutbeard, with the same discipline I use to my family, I will question you. As I conceive, Cutbeard, this gentlewoman is she you have provided, and brought, in hope she will fit me in the place and person of a wife? (——) Very well done, Cutbeard. I conceive besides, Cutbeard, you have been pre-acquainted with her birth, education, and qualities, or else you would not prefer her to my acceptance, in the weighty

consequence of marriage. (——) This I conceive, Cutbeard. (——) Very well done, Cutbeard. [*he goes about her and views her.*] Give aside now a little, and leave me to examine her condition, and aptitude to my affection. She is exceeding fair, and of a special good favour; a sweet composition or harmony of limbs; her temper of beauty has the true height of my blood. The knave hath exceedingly well fitted me without: I will now try her within. Come near, fair gentlewoman; let not my behaviour seem rude, though unto you, being rare, it may haply appear strange. (——) [*she curt'sies.*] Nay, lady, you may speak, though Cutbeard and my man might not; for of all sounds, only the sweet voice of a fair lady has the just length of mine ears. I beseech you, say, lady, out of the first fire of meeting eyes (they say) love is stricken: do you feel any such motion, ha, lady? (——) [*curt'sie.*] Alas, lady, these answers by silent curt'sies from you, art too courtless and simple. Can you speak, lady?

*Epi.* Judge you, forsooth. [*she speaks softly.*

*Mor.* What say you, lady? Speak out, I beseech you.

*Epi.* Judge you, forsooth.

*Mor.* O' my judgment, a divine softness! [*curtsie.*]  
(——) Excellent! divine! if it were possible she should hold out thus! Peace, Cutbeard, thou art made for ever, as thou hast made me, if this felicity have lasting: but I will try her further. And do you alone so much differ from all, that what they (with so much circumstance) affect and toil for, to seem sharp and conceited, you can bury in yourself with silence, and rather trust your graces to the fair conscience of virtue, than to the world's or your own proclamation?

*Epi.* I should be sorry else.

*Mor.* What say you, lady? good lady, speak out.

*Epi.* I should be sorry else.

*Mor.* O Morose! thou art happy above mankind! But hear me, fair lady; I do also love to see her whom I shall choose for my heifer, to be the first and principal in all fashions: and how will you be able, lady, with this frugality of speech, to give the manifold (but necessary) instructions, for that bodice, these sleeves, those skirts, this cut, that stitch, this embroidery, that lace, this wire, those knots, that ruff, those roses, this girdle, that fan, the t'other scarf, these gloves? Ha! what say you, lady?

*Epi.* I'll leave it to you, sir.

*Mor.* How, lady? pray you, rise a note.

*Epi.* I leave it to wisdom, and you, sir.

*Mor.* Admirable creature! I will trouble you no more: I will not sin against so sweet a simplicity. Cutbeard, I give thee the lease of thy house free: thank me not but with thy leg. (——) Go thy ways, and get me a minister presently, with a soft low voice, to marry us; and pray him he will not be impertinent, but brief as he can; away: softly, Cutbeard. Sirrah, conduct your mistress into the dining-room, your now mistress. [*Exeunt Cutbeard, Epicæne, Mute.*

### SCENE XIII.

*Morose.*

*Mor.* O my felicity! how shall I be reveng'd on mine insolent kinsman, and his plots to fright me from marrying! This night I will get an heir, and thrust him out of my blood, like a stranger. He would be knighted, forsooth, and thought by that means to reign over me, his title must do it. [*Exit.*



SCENE XIV.

*Sir John Daw's.\**

*Truewit, Dauphine, Clerimont.*

*Tru.* Are you sure he is not gone by?

*Daupb.* No, I stay'd in the shop ever since.

*Cler.* But he may take the other end of the lane.

*Daupb.* No, I told him I would be here at this end; I appointed him hither.

*Tru.* What a barbarian it is to stay then!

*Daupb.* Yonder he comes.

*Cler.* And his charge left behind him, which is a very good sign, Dauphine.

SCENE XV.

*Truewit, Dauphine, Clerimont; to them, Cutbeard.*

*Daupb.* How now, Cutbeard, succeeds it, or no?

*Cut.* Past imagination, sir, *omnia secunda*; you

\* I thought there was no occasion to suppose a new scene. The shop alluded to may be conceived appertinent to the lodging.

could not have pray'd to have had it so well : *saltat senex*, as it is i' the proverb, he does triumph in his felicity, admires the party ! he has given me the lease of my house too ! and I am now going for a silent minister to marry 'em, and away.

*Tru.* 'Slight, get one o' the silenc'd ministers ; a zealous brother would torment him purely.

*Cut.* *Cum privilegio*, sir.

*Dauph.* O, by no means ; let's do nothing to hinder it now : when 'tis done and finish'd, I am for you, for any device of vexation.

*Cut.* And that shall be within this half hour, upon my dexterity, gentlemen. Contrive what you can in the mean time, *bonis avibus*. [Exit.

## SCENE XVI.

*Truewit, Dauphine, Clerimont.*

*Cler.* How the slave doth Latin it !

*Tru.* It would be made a jest to posterity, sirs, this day's mirth, if ye will.

*Cler.* Beshrew his heart that will not, I pronounce.

*Daupb.* And for my part. What is't?

*Tru.* To translate all La-Foole's company, and his feast thither, to-day, to celebrate this bridal.

*Daupb.* I, Marry; but how will't be done?

*Tru.* I'll undertake the directing of all the lady-guests thither, and then the meat must follow.

*Cler.* For God's sake, let's effect it; it will be an excellent comedy of affliction, so many several noises.

*Daupb.* But are they not at the other place already, think you?

*Tru.* I'll warrant you for the college-honours: one o' their faces has not the priming colour laid on yet, nor the other her smock sleek'd.

*Cler.* Who knows the house?

*Tru.* I'll lead you: were you never there yet.

*Daupb.* Not I.

*Cler.* Nor I.

*Tru.* Where ha' you liv'd then? not know Tom Otter!

*Cler.* No: for God's sake what is he?

*Tru.* An excellent animal, equal with your Daw or La-Foole, if not transcendent; and does Latin it as much as your barber: he is his wife's subject,

he calls her princess, and at such times as these follows her up and down the house like a page, with his hat off, partly for heat, partly for reverence. Why, sir, he has been a great man at the bear-garden in his time. He will rail on his wife, with certain common places, behind her back; and to her face——

*Dauph.* Let's go see him, I petition you.

[*Exeunt.*]

*ACT III. SCENE I.*

*Otter's House.*

*Otter, Mrs. Otter.*

*Ott.* Nay, good princess, hear me *pauca verba*.

*Mrs. Ott.* By that light, I'll ha' you chain'd up, with your bull-dogs and bear-dogs, if you be not civil the sooner. I'll send you to kennel, i'faith. You were best bait me with your bull, bear, and horse? Never a time that the courtiers or colleagues come to the house, but you make it a Shrove-Tuesday! I would have you get your Whitsuntide velvet cap, and your staff i' your hand, to entertain 'em; yes, in troth, do.

*Ott.* No so, princess, neither; but under correction, sweet princess, give me leave——These things I am known to the courtiers by: it is reported to them for my humour, and they receive it so, and do expect it. Tom Otter's bull, bear, and horse, is known all over England, *in rerum natura*.



*Mrs. Ott.* 'Fore me, I will *na-ture* 'em over to Paris-garden, and *na-ture* you thither too, if you pronounce 'em again. Is a bear a fit beast, or a bull, to mix in society with great ladies; Think i' your discretion, in any good polity.

*Ott.* The horse then, good princess.

*Mrs. Ott.* Well, I am contented for the horse.

*Ott.* And it is a delicate fine horse this. *Poetarum Pegasus.* Under correction, princess, Jupiter did turn himself into a—*taurus*, or bull, under correction, good princess.

*Mrs. Ott.* By my integrity, I'll send you over to the Bank-side, I'll commit you to the master of the garden, if I hear but a syllable more. Is this according to the instrument, when I married you? that I would be princess, and reign in mine own house; and you would be my subject, and obey me? do I allow you your half-crown a day, to spend where you will, among your gamesters, to vex and torment me at such times as these? Who graces you with courtiers or great personages, to speak to you out of their coaches, and come home to your house? were you ever so much as look'd upon by a lord or a lady, before I married you, but on the Eas-

ter or Whitsun holidays? and then out at the banquetting house window, when Ned Whiting or George Stone were at the stake?

SCENE II.

*Otter, Mrs. Otter; to them, Truewit, Clerimont, and Dauphine.*

*Tru.* For God's sake, let's go stave her off him. *[Apart.*

*Mrs. Ott.* Answer me to that. And did not I take you up from thence, in an old greasy buff-doublet, with points, and green velvet sleeves, out at the elbows? you forget this.

*Tru.* She'll worry him, if we help not in time.

*[Apart.*

*Mrs. Ott.* O, here are some o' the gallants! Go to, behave yourself distinctly, and with good morality; or, I protest, I'll take away your exhibition.

*Tru.* By your leave, fair mistress Otter, I'll be bold to enter these gentlemen in your acquaintance.

*Mrs. Ott.* I shall not be obnoxious, or diffcil, sir.

*Tru.* How does my noble captain? is the bull, bear, and horse in *rerum natura* still?

*Ott.* Sir, *sic visum superis.*

*Mrs. Ott.* I would you would but intimate 'em, do. Go your ways in, and get toasts and butter made for the woodcocks: that's a fit province for you.

[*Exit Otter.*

SCENE III.

*Truewit, Mrs. Otter, Clerimont, Dauphine.*

*Cler.* Alas, what a tyranny is this poor fellow married to? [*Apart.*

*Tru.* O, but the sport will be anon, when we get him loose. [*Apart.*

*Dauph.* Dares he ever speak? [*Apart.*

*Tru.* No Anabaptist ever rail'd with the like license: but mark her language in the mean time, I beseech you. [*Apart.*

*Mrs. Ott.* Gentlemen, you are very aptly come. My cousin, Sir Amorous, will be here briefly.

*Tru.* In good time, lady. Was not Sir John Daw here to ask for him, and the company?

*Mrs. Ott.* I cannot assure you, Mr. Truewit. Here was a very melancholy knight in a ruff, that demanded my subject for somebody, a gentleman, I think.

*Cler.* That was he, lady.

*Mrs. Ott.* But he departed straight, I can resolve you.

*Dauph.* What an excellent choice phrase this lady expresses in!

*Tru.* O, sir, she is the only authentical courtier, that is not naturally bred one, in the city.

*Mrs. Ott.* You have taken that report upon trust, gentlemen.

*Tru.* No, I assure you, the court governs it so, lady, in your behalf.

*Mrs. Ott.* I am the servant of the court and courtiers, sir.

*Tru.* They are rather your idolaters.

*Mrs. Ott.* No so, sir.

SCENE IV.

*Mrs. Otter, Truewit, Clerimont, Dauphine; to them, Cutbeard.*

*Daupb.* How now, Cutbeard? any cross?

*Cut.* O no, sir, *omnia bene*. 'Twas never better o' the hinges, all's sure. I have so pleas'd him with a curate, that he's gone to't almost with the delight he hopes for soon. [Apart.

*Daupb.* What, is he for a vicar? [Apart.

*Cut.* One that has catch'd a cold, sir, and can scarce be heard six inches off; as if he spoke out of a bulrush that were not pick'd, or his throat were full of pith: a fine quick fellow, and an excellent barber of prayers. I came to tell you, sir, that you might *omnem movere lapidem*, (as they say) be ready with your vexation. [Apart.

*Tru.* Well, I'll go. \*[looking significantly.

[*Exeunt Truewit and Cutbeard, severally.*

\* In several instances, in the first parts of this play, we are not quite soon enough let into the intention of the author.



*SCENE V.*

*Mrs. Otter, Clerimont, Dauphine.*

*Mrs. Ott.* Is Mr. Truewit gone?

*Daupb.* Yes, lady, there is some unfortunate business fallen out.

*Mrs. Ott.* So I judged by the physiognomy of the fellow that came in; and I had a dream last night too of the new pageant, and my lady mayoress, which is always very ominous to me. I told it my lady Haughty t'other day, when her honour came hither to see some China stuffs; and she expounded it out of Artemidorus, and I have found it since very true. It has done me many affronts.

*Cler.* Your dream, lady?

*Mrs. Ott.* Yes, sir, any thing I do but dream o' the city. It stain'd me a damask table-cloth, cost me eighteen pound, at one time; and burnt me a black satin gown, as I stood by the fire, at my lady Centaure's chamber in the college, another time. A third time, at the lord's masque, it dropt all my wire and my

ruff with wax candle, that I could not go up to the banquet. A fourth time, as I was taking coach to go to Ware, to meet a friend, it dash'd me a new suit all over (a crimson satin doublet, and black velvet skirts) with a brewer's horse, that I was fain to go in and shift me, and kept my chamber a leash of days for the anguish of it.

*Dauph.* These were dire mischances, lady.

*Cler.* I would not dwell in the city, an 'twere so fatal to me.

*Mrs. Ott.* Yes, sir; but I do take advice of my doctor, to dream of it as little as I can.

*Dauph.* You do well, mistress Otter.

*Mrs. Ott.* Will it please you to enter the house farther, gentlemen?

*Dauph.* And your favour, lady: but we stay to speak with a knight, Sir John Daw, who is here come. We shall follow you, lady.

*Mrs. Ott.* At your own time, sir.

*SCENE VI.*

*Mrs. Otter, Clerimont, Dauphine; to them, Daw.*

*Mrs. Ott.* It is my cousin, Sir Amorous his feast—

*Dauph.* I know it, lady.

*Mrs. Ott.* And mine together. But it is for his honour, and therefore I take no name of it, more than of the place.

*Dauph.* You are a bounteous kinswoman.

*Mrs. Ott.* Your servant, sir. [*Exit.*

*SCENE VII.*

*Clerimont, Daw, Dauphine.*

*Cler.* Why, do not you know it, sir John Daw?

*Daw.* No, I am a rook if I do.

*Cler.* I'll tell you then; she's married by this time. And whereas you were put i' the head, that

she was gone with sir Dauphine, I assure you, sir Dauphine has been the noblest, honestest friend to you, that ever gentleman of your quality could boast of. He has discover'd the whole plot, and made your mistress so acknowledging, and indeed so asham'd of her injury to you, that she desires you to forgive her, and but grace her wedding with your presence to-day--She is to be married to a very good fortune, she says, his uncle, old Morose: and she will'd me in private to tell you, that she shall be able to do you more favours, and with more security now than before.

*Daw.* Did she say so, i' faith?

*Cler.* Why, what do you think of me, sir John? ask sir Dauphine.

*Daw.* Nay, I believe you. Good sir Dauphine, did she desire me to forgive her?

*Cler.* I assure you, sir John, she did.

*Daw.* Nay then, I do with all my heart, and I'll be jovial.

*Cler.* Yes, for look you, sir, this was the injury to you. La-Foole intended this feast to honour her bridal day, and made you the property to invite the college ladies, and promise to bring her:

and then at the times he would have appear'd (as his friend) to have given you the dor. Whereas now, sir Dauphine has brought her to a feeling of it, with this kind of satisfaction, that you shall bring all the ladies to the place where she is, and be very jovial; and there, she will have a dinner, which shall be in your name: and so disappoint La-Foole.

*Daw.* As I am a knight, I honour her, and forgive her heartily.

*Cler.* About it then, presently. Truewit is gone before, to confront the coaches, and to acquaint you with so much, if he meet you. Join with him, and 'tis well. See, here comes your antagonist, but take you no notice, but be very jovial.



SCENE VIII.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Daw ; to them, La-Foole.*

*La-F.* Are the ladies come, sir John Daw, and your mistress? Sir Dauphine! you are exceeding welcome, and honest master Clerimont. Where's my cousin? did you see no collegiates, gentlemen?  
[*Exit Daw.*

SCENE IX.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, La-Foole.*

*Daupb.* 'Collegiates! do you not hear, sir Amorous, how you are abus'd?

*La-F.* How, sir!

*Cler.* Will you speak so kindly to sir John Daw, that has done you such an affront.

*La-F.* Wherein, gentlemen? let me be a suitor to you to know; I beseech you!

*Cler.* Why sir, his mistress is married to-day to

sir Dauphine's uncle, your cousin's neighbour, and he has diverted all the ladies, and all your company thither, to frustrate your provision, and stick a disgrace upon you. He was here now, to have entic'd us away from you too : but we told him his own, I think.

*La-F.* Has sir John Daw wrong'd me so inhumanly ?

*Daupb.* He has done it, sir Amorous, most maliciously and treacherously : but if you'll be rul'd by us, you shall quit him i' faith.

*La-F.* Good gentlemen ! I'll make one, believe it. How, I pray ?

*Daupb.* Marry, sir, get me your pheasants, and your godwits, and your best meat, and dish it in silver dishes of your cousin's presently, and say nothing, but clap me a clean towel about you, like a sewer ; and bare-headed, march afore it with a good confidence ('tis but over the way, hard by), and we'll second you, where you shall set it o' the board, and bid 'em welcome to't, which shall show 'tis yours, and disgrace his preparation utterly : and for your cousin, whereas she should be troubled here at home with care of making and giving welcome, she shall transfer all

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that labour thither, and be a principal guest herself, sit rank'd with the college honours, and be honour'd, and have her health drunk as often, as bare, and as loud as the best of 'em.

*La-F.* I'll go tell her presently. It shall be done, that's resolv'd. [*Exit.*

SCENE X.

*Clerimont, Dauphine.*

*Cler.* I thought he would not hear it out, but 'twould take him.

*Daupb.* Well, there be guests and meat now, how shall we do for music?

*Cler.* The smell of the venison, going through the street, will invite one noise of fiddlers or other.

*Daupb.* I would it would call the trumpeters thither.

*Cler.* They have intelligence of all feasts. Twenty to one but we have 'em.

*Daupb.* 'Twill be a most solemn day for my uncle, and an excellent fit of mirth for us.

*Cler.* If we can hold up the emulation betwixt Foole and Daw, and never bring them to expostulate.

*Daupb.* Tut, flatter 'em both (as Truewit says), and you may take their understandings in a purse-net.

*Cler.* See! sir Amorous has his towel on already. Have you persuaded your cousin?

*SCENE XI.*

*Clerimont, Dauphine ; to them, La-Foole, like  
a sewer.*

*La-F.* Yes, 'tis very feasible ; she'll do any thing, she says, rather than the La-Fooles shall be disgrac'd.

*Daupb.* She is a noble kinswoman. It will be such a pest'ling device, sir Amorous ! it will pound all your enemy's practices to powder, and blow him up with his own mine, his own train.

*La-F.* Nay, we'll give fire, I warrant you.

*Cler.* But you must carry it privately, without any noise, and take no notice, by any means——

SCENE XII.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, La-Foole ; to them, Otter.*

*Ott.* Gentlemen, my princess says you shall have all her silver dishes, *festinate* : and she's gone to alter her tire a little, and go with you——

*Cler.* And yourself too, captain Otter.

*Daupb.* By any means, sir.

*Ott.* Yes, sir, I do 'mean it : but I would entreat my cousin, sir Amorous, and you, gentlemen, to be suitors to my princess, that I may carry my bull and my bear, as well as my horse.

*Cler.* That you shall do, captain Otter.

*La-F.* My cousin will never consent, gentlemen.

*Daupb.* She must consent, sir Amorous, to reason.

*La-F.* Why, she says they are no decorum among ladies.

*Ott.* But they are decora, and that's better, sir.

*Daupb.* Where is your princess, captain ? pray, be our leader.



*Ott.* That I shall, sir.

*Cler.* Make haste, good sir Amorous. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XIII.

*Morose's House.\**

*Morose, Epicæne, Parson, Cutbeard.*

*Mor.* Sir, there's an angel for yourself, and a brace of angels for your cold. Muse not at this manage of my bounty. It is fit we should thank fortune, double to nature, for any benefit she confers

\* Dryden, in saying that the scene after the first act was within the space of one house, could not mean that it did not change, but that the lodgings of Daw and Epicæne, the house of Otter, and that of Morose, were adjoining, as they are said to be. There is strict unity of place only from the present scene. I will observe too, that all this part of the play, in which it is preserved, is much the best, and does credit to the unity of place, suitably to the inference to be drawn from Mason's observation, that "among our own writers, the most regular of their compositions is generally reckoned their chef-d'œuvre." Letters on Elfrida.

upon us; besides, it is your imperfection, but my solace. [*the Parson speaks as having a cold.*

*Par.* I thank your worship; so it is mine, now.

*Mor.* What says he, Cutbeard?

*Cut.* He says, *præsto*, sir, whensoever your worship needs him, he can be ready with the like. He got this cold with sitting up late, and singing catches with cloth-workers.

*Mor.* No more. I thank him.

*Par.* God keep your worship, and give you much joy with your fair spouse (Umh, umh.) [*he coughs.*

*Mor.* O, O, stay, Cutbeard! let him give me five shillings of my money back. As it is bounty to reward benefits, so it is equity to mulct injuries. I will have it; what says he?

*Cut.* He cannot change it, sir.

*Mor.* It must be chang'd.

*Cut.* Cough again.

*Mor.* What says he?

*Cut.* He will cough out the rest, sir.

*Par.* (Umh, umh, umh.) [*again.*

*Mor.* Away, away with him, stop his mouth, away, I forgive it.— [*Exit Parson.*

SCENE XIV.

*Morose, Epicæne, Cutbeard.*

*Epi.* Fye, master Morose, that you will use this violence to a man of the church.

*Mor.* How!

*Epi.* It does not become your gravity, or breeding (as you pretend in court), to have offer'd this outrage on a waterman, or any more bois'trous creature, much less on a man of his civil coat.

*Mor.* You can speak then!

*Epi.* Yes, sir.

*Mor.* Speak out, I mean.

*Epi.* Why, did you think you had married a statue? or a motion only? one of the French puppets, with the eyes turn'd with a wire? or some innocent out of the hospital, that would stand with her hands thus, and a playse mouth, and look upon you.

*Mor.* O immodesty! a manifest woman! what, Cutbeard?

*Epi.* Nay, never quarrel with Cutbeard, sir, it is

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too late now. I confess it doth bate somewhat of the modesty I had, when I writ simply, maid: but I hope I shall make it a stock still competent to the estate and dignity of your wife.\* [*Exit Cutbeard.*

SCENE XV.

*Morose, Epicæne.*

*Mor.* She can talk!

*Epi.* Yes indeed, sir.

*Mor.* What, sirrah. None of my knaves there? where is this impostor Cutbeard?

*Epi.* Speak to him, fellow, speak to him. I'll have none of this unnatural dumbness in my house, in a family where I govern.

\* The discovery is made so humorously to Morose in this scene after the marriage, that I wonder Colman would transpose it, and defer the discovery to the entrance of the ladies; the effect of which *inundation* we are more sensible of, from being here prepared for it. In adapting a play for representation, we need not alter the plan of a respectable author, provided we lop off redundancies.

*Mor.* She is my regent already ! I have married a Penthesilea, a Semiramis, sold my liberty to a distaff.

SCENE XVI.

*Morose, Epicæne ; to them, Truewit.*

*Tru.* Where's master Morose ?

*Mor.* Is he come again ! Lord have mercy upon me !

*Tru.* God save you, sir, and give you all contentment in your fair choice, here. Before, I was the bird of night to you, the owl ; but now I am the messenger of peace, a dove, and bring you the glad wishes of many friends to the celebration of this good hour.

*Mor.* What hour, sir ?

*Tru.* Your marriage hour, sir. I commend your resolution, that (notwithstanding all the dangers I laid afore you, in the voice of a night-crow) would yet go on, and be yourself. It shews you are a man constant to your own ends, and upright to your purposes, that would not be put off with left-handed cries.



*Mor.* How should you arrive at the knowledge of so much !

*Tru.* Why, did you ever hope, sir, committing the secrecy of it to a barber, that less than the whole town should know it ? Could your gravity forget so old and noted a remnant, as *lippis et tonsoribus notum* ? Here will be three or four fashionable ladies from the college to visit you presently, and their train of minions and followers.

*Mor.* Bar my doors ! bar my doors ! where are all my eaters ? my mouths, now ? bar up my doors, you varlets !

*Epi.* He is a varlet that stirs to such an office. Let 'em stand open. I would see him that dares move his eyes toward it. Shall I have a barricado made against my friends, to be barr'd of any pleasure they can bring in to me, with their honourable visitation.

*Mor.* O, Amazonian impudence !

*Tru.* Nay faith, in this, sir, she speaks but reason : and methinks is more continent than you. Would you go to bed so presently, sir, afore noon ? Those delights are to be steeped in the humour and silence of the night : and give the day to other

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open pleasures, and jollities of feasting, of music, of revels, of discourse.

*Mor.* O my torment, my torment!

*Tru.* Nay, if you endure the first half hour, sir, so tediously, and with this irksomeness; what comfort, or hope can this fair gentlewoman make to herself hereafter, in the consideration of so many years as are to come——

*Mor.* Of my affliction. Good sir, depart, and let her do it alone.

*Tru.* I have done, sir.

### SCENE XVII.

*Morose, Epicæne, Truewit; to them, Haughty, Centaure, Mavis, Trusty, and Daw.*

*Daw.* This way, madam.

*Mor.* O, the sea breaks in upon me! another flood! an inundation! I shall be overwhelm'd with noise. It beats already at my shores. I feel an earthquake in myself for't.

*Daw.* 'Give you joy, mistress.—I have brought

some ladies here, to see and know you. My lady Haughty, [*she kisses them severally, as he presents them.*] this my lady Centaure, mistress Dol Mavis, mistress Trusty, my lady Haughty's woman. Where's your husband? let's see him: can he endure no noise? let me come to him.

*Tru.* Nay, sir, you must kiss the ladies, you must not go away, now; they come toward you, to seek you out.

*Hau.* Master Morose, would you steal a marriage thus, in the midst of so many friends, and not acquaint us? Well, I'll kiss you, notwithstanding the justice of my quarrel: you shall give me leave, mistress, to use a becoming familiarity with your husband.

*Epi.* Your ladyship does me an honour in it, to let me know he is so worthy your favour: as you have done both him and me grace, to visit so unprepared a pair to entertain you.\*

*Mor.* Compliment! Compliment!

*Epi.* But I must lay the burden of that upon my servant here.

\* There is humour in this speech following what precedes; which is lost in the altered play.

*Hau.* It shall not need, mistress Morose; we will all bear, rather than one shall be oppress'd. Is this the silent woman? [*Apart.*

*Cen.* Nay, she has found her tongue since she was married, master Truewit says. [*Apart.*

*Hau.* We'll have her to the college: an' she have wit, she shall be one of us; shall she not, Centaure? we'll make her a collegiate. [*Apart.*

*Cen.* Yes faith, madam, and Mavis and she will set up a side. [*Apart.*

*Tru.* Believe it, madam, and mistress Mavis she will sustain her part. [*Apart.*

*Mav.* I'll tell you that, when I have talk'd with her, and tried her. [*Apart.*

*Hau.* Use her very civilly, Mavis. [*Apart.*

*Mav.* So I will, madam. [*Apart.*

*Mor.* Blessed minute! that they would whisper thus ever!

*Tru.* In the mean time, madam, would but your ladyship help to vex him a little: you know his disease, talk to him about the wedding ceremonies, or call for your gloves, or—— [*Apart.*

*Hau.* Let me alone. Centaure, help me. [*Apart.*]  
Master Bridegroom, where are you? [*loud.*]

*Mor.* O, it was too miraculously good, to last!

*Hau.* We see no ensigns of a wedding here; no character of a bridal: where be our skarves, and our gloves? I pray you, give 'em us. Let's know your bride's colours, and yours at least.

*Cen.* Alas, madam, he has provided none.

*Mor.* Had I known your ladyship's painter, I would.

*Hau.* He has given it you, Centaure, i'faith. But do you hear, master Morose, a jest will not absolve you in this manner. You that have suck'd the milk of the court, and from thence have been brought up to the very strong meats and wine of it; been a courtier from the biggen to the night-cap (as we may say): and you to offend in such a high point of ceremony as this! and let your nuptials want all marks of solemnity! how much plate have you lost to-day (if you had but regarded your profit), what gifts, what friends, through your mere rusticity?

*Mor.* Madam——

*Hau.* Pardon me, sir, I must insinuate your errors to you; no gloves? no garters? no skarves? no epithalamium? no masque?



*Daw.* Yes, madam, I'll make an epithalamium, I promise my mistress, I have begun it already: will your ladyship hear it?

*Mor.* Will it please your ladyship command a chamber, and be private with your friend? you shall have your choice of rooms to retire to after.

*Epi.* Come, you are a rude bridegroom, to entertain ladies of honour in this fashion.

*Cen.* He is a rude groom, indeed.

*Tru.* By that light, you deserve to be grafted, and have your horns reach from one side of the island to the other. Do not mistake me, sir; I but speak this to give the ladies some heart again, not for any malice to you.

*Mor.* Is this your bravo, ladies?

*Tru.* As God help me, if you utter such another word, I'll take mistress bride in, and begin to you in a very sad cup; do you see? Go to, know your friends, and such as love you.

SCENE XVIII.

*Morose, Truewit, Haughty, Centaure, Mavis, Trusty, Daw; to them, Clerimont, Dauphine, &c.*

*Cler.* By your leave, ladies. Do you want any music? I have brought you variety of noises. Play, sirs, all of you. [*music of all sorts.*

*Mor.* O, a plot, a plot, a plot, a plot, upon me! this day I shall be their anvil to work on, thy will grate me asunder. 'Tis worse than the noise of a saw.

*Cler.* No, they are hair, rosin, and guts. I can give you the receipt.

*Tru.* Peace, boys.

*Cler.* Play, I say.

*Tru.* Peace, rascals. You see who's your friend now. Look you here, sir, what honour is done you unexpected, by your nephew; a wedding dinner come, and a knight-sewer before it, for the more reputation: and fine Mrs. Otter, your neighbour, in the rump or tail of it.

*SCENE XIX.*

*The same; to them, enter La-Foole, sewing the meat, and Mrs. Otter.*

*Mor.* Is that Gorgon, that Medusa come? hide me, hide me!

*Tru.* I warrant you, sir, she will not transform you. Look upon her with a good courage. Pray you, entertain her, and conduct your guests in. No? Mistress bride, will you entreat in the ladies? your bridegroom is so shame-fac'd here——

*Epi.* [*ceremoniously.*] Will it please your ladyship, madam?

*Cent.* With the benefit of your company, mistress.

*Mrs. Ott.* 'Tis my place.

*Mav.* You shall pardon me, mistress Otter.

*Mrs. Ott.* But——

*Mav.* We'll dispute that within.

SCENE XX.

*The same ; to them, Otter.*

*Tru.* Captain Otter, what news?

*Ott.* I have brought my bull, bear, and horse, in private, and yonder are the trumpeters without, and the drum, gentlemen.

*[the drum and trumpets sound.]*

*Mor.* O, O, O!

*Ott.* And we will have a rouse in each of them, anon, for bold Britons, i' faith.

*Mor.* O, O, O!

*All.* Follow, follow, follow.

*[Exeunt. Morose a different way from the rest.]*

*ACT IV. SCENE I.*

*Truewit, Clerimont.*

*Tru.* Was there ever poor bridegroom so torment-  
ed? or man, indeed?

*Cler.* I have not read of the like in the chronicles  
of the land.

*Tru.* Sure, he cannot but go to a place of rest,  
after all this purgatory.

*Cler.* And she carries it up bravely.

*Tru.* She takes any occasion to speak: that's the  
height on't.

*Cler.* And how soberly Dauphine labours to sa-  
tisfy him, that it was none of his plot!

*Tru.* And has almost brought him to the faith, i' the  
article. Here he comes. Where is he now? what's  
become of him, Dauphine?



SCENE II.

*Truewit, Clerimont; to them, Dauphine.*

*Dauph.* [*laughing.*] O, hold me up a little, I shall go away i' the jest else. He has got on his whole nest of night-caps, and lock'd himself up i' the top of the house, as high as ever he can climb from the noise. I peep'd in at a cranny, and saw him sitting over a cross-beam o' the roof: and he will sleep there.

*Tru.* I begin to suspect your diligence, Dauphine. Speak, art thou in love in earnest?

*Dauph.* Yes, by my troth, am I; with all the collegiates.

*Cler.* Out on thee.

*Tru.* No; I like him well. Men should love wisely, and all women. Thou would'st think it strange, if I should make 'em all in love with thee afore night!

*Dauph.* I would say, thou hadst the best philter i' the world, and couldst do more than madam Medea, or doctor Foreman.

*Tru.* If I do not, let me play the mountebank

*Act IV.*] SILENT WOMAN. L. 1410—1425. 343

for my meat, while I live, and the bawd for my drink.

*Dauph.* So be it, I say.

### SCENE III.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Truewit; to them, La-Foole,  
Otter, and Daw.*

*Ott.* O Lord, gentlemen, how my knights and I have miss'd you here!

*Cler.* Why, captain, what service? what service?

*Ott.* To see me bring up my bull, bear, and horse, to fight.

*Daw.* Yes, faith, the captain says we shall be his dogs to bait 'em.

*Dauph.* A good employment.

*Tru.* Come on, let's see your course then.

*La-F.* I am afraid my cousin will be offended, if she come.

*Ott.* Be afraid of nothing. Gentlemen, I have plac'd the drum and the trumpets, and one to give

'em the sign when you are ready. Here's my bull for myself, and my bear for sir John Daw, and my horse for sir Amorous. Now set your foot to mine, and yours to his, and——

*La-F.* Pray God, my cousin come not.

*Ott.* St. George and St. Andrew! Fear no cousins. Come, sound, sound. *Et rauco strepuerunt cornua cantu.*

*Tru.* Well said, captain, i'faith; well fought at the bull.

*Cler.* Well held at the bear.

*Tru.* Low, low, captain.

*Daupb.* O, the horse has kick'd off his dog already.

*La-F.* I cannot drink it, as I am a knight.

*Tru.* Gods so, off with his spurs, somebody.

*La-F.* It goes against my conscience. My cousin will be angry with it.

*Daw.* I ha' done mine.

*Tru.* You fought high and fair, sir John.

*Cler.* At the head.

*Daupb.* Like an excellent bear-dog.

*Ott.* Sir Amorous, you must not equivocate. It must be pull'd down, for all my cousin.

*Act IV.*] SILENT WOMAN. L. 1449—1463. 345

*Cler.* 'Sfoot, if you take not your drink, they'll think you are discontented with something; you'll betray all, if you take the least notice.

*La-F.* Not I, I'll both drink and talk then.

*Ott.* You must pull the horse on his knees, sir Amorous; fear no cousins. *Facta est alea.*

*Tru.* O, now he's in his vein, and bold. The least hint given him of his wife now, will make him rail desperately. [ *Apart.*

*Cler.* Speak to him of her. [ *Apart.*

*Tru.* Do you, and I'll fetch her to the hearing of it.\* [ *Apart. Exit.*

#### SCENE IV.

*Clerimont, Daupbine, La-Foole, Otter, and Daw.*

*Daupb.* Captain He-Otter, your She-Otter is coming, your wife.

*Ott.* Wife! Buz. *Titivilitium.* There's no such

\* The incident of a wife beating her husband, in consequence of such a scheme, though *perhaps* only natural in idea, is sufficiently comic.

thing in nature. I confess, gentlemen, I have a cook, a laundress, a house-drudge, that serves my necessary turns, and goes under that title: but he's an ass, that will be so uxorious to tie his affections to one circle. Come, the name dulls appetite. Here replenish again; another bout. Wives are nasty slut-tish animals.

*Dauph.* O, captain.

*Ott.* As ever the earth bare, *tribus verbis*.

*Mor.* Villains, murderers, sons of the earth, and traitors, what do you there?

[*Morose within, the trumpets sounding.*

*Ott.* A wife is a scurvy clogdogdo, an unlucky thing, a very foresaid bear-whelp, without any good fashion or breeding; *mala bestia*.

[*his wife is brought out to bear him.*



SCENE V.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, La-Foole, Otter, Daw; to them; Mrs. Otter, brought by Truewit.*

*Dauph.* Why did you marry one then, captain?

*Ott.* I married with six thousand pound, I. I was in love with that. I ha' not kiss'd my fury these forty weeks.

*Cler.* The more to blame you, captain.

*Tru.* Nay, Mrs. Otter, hear him a little first.

[*Apart.*

*Ott.* She has a breath worse than my grandmother's, *profectò.*

*Mrs. Ott.* O treacherous liar. Kiss me, sweet master Truewit, and prove him a slandering knave.

[*Apart.*

*Tru.* I'll rather believe you, lady. [*Aside.*

*Ott.* And she has a peruke that's like a pound of hemp, made up in shoe-threads.

*Mrs. Ott.* O viper, mandrake! [*Apart.*

*Ott.* A most vile face! and yet she spends me forty pound a year in mercury and hogs-bones. All her

teeth were made i' the Black-friars, both her eyebrows i' the Strand, and her hair in Silver-street. Every part o' the town owns a piece of her.

*Mrs. Ott.* I cannot hold. [*Apart.*

*Ott.* She takes herself asunder still when she goes to bed, into some twenty boxes; and about next day noon is put together again, like a great German clock; and so comes forth, and rings a tedious larum to the whole house, and then is quiet again for an hour, but for her quarters. Ha' you done me right, gentlemen?

*Mrs. Ott.* No, sir, I'll do you right with my quarters, with my quarters.

[*she falls upon him, and beats him.*

*Ott.* O, hold, good princess. [*beats him.*

*Tru.* Sound, sound. [*trumpets.*

*Cler.* A battle, a battle.

*Mrs. Ott.* You notorious stinkardly bearward, does my breath smell?

*Ott.* Under correction, dear princess. Look to my bear and my horse, gentlemen.

*Mrs. Ott.* Do I want teeth, and eyebrows, thou bull-dog? [*beats him.*

*Tru.* Sound, sound still. [*trumpets.*

*Ott.* No, I protest, under correction.—

*Act IV.] SILENT WOMAN. L. 1517—1525. 349*

*Mrs. Ott.* Now you are under correction, you protest: but you did not protest before correction, sir. Thou Judas, to offer to betray thy princess! I'll make thee an example—

*[Morose descends with a long sword.*

*SCENE VI.*

*Clerimont, Dauphine, La-Foole, Otter, Mrs. Otter, Daw, Truewit; to them, Morose.*

*Mor.* I will have no such examples in my house, lady Otter.

*Mrs. Ott.* Ah——

*[Trumpeters, Mrs. Otter, Daw, and La-Foole, run out.*

*SCENE VII.*

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Otter, Truewit, Morose.*

*Mor.* Rogues, hell-hounds, Stentors, out of my doors, you sons of noise and tumult, begot on an ill

350 SILENT WOMAN. L. 1526—1536. [*Act IV.*

May-day, or when the gally-foist is afloat to Westminster! A trumpeter could not be conceiv'd but then.

*Daupb.* What ails you, sir?

*Mor.* They have rent my roof, walls, and all my windows asunder, with their brazen throats. [*Exit.*

### SCENE VIII.

*Clerimont, Daupbine, Otter, Truewit.*

*Tru.* Best follow him, Dauphine.

[*Exit Daupbine.*

### SCENE IX.

*Clerimont, Otter, Truewit.*

*Cler.* Where's Daw and La-Foole?

*Ott.* They are both run away, sir. Good gentlemen, help to pacify my princess, and speak to the great ladies for me. Now must I go lie with the bears

*Act IV.] SILENT WOMAN. L. 1537—1546. 351*

this fortnight, and keep out o' the way, till my peace be made, for this scandal she hath taken.

*Tru.* Away, captain, get off while you are well.

*[Exit Otter.]*

*SCENE X.*

*Clerimont, Truewit.*

*Cler.* I am glad we are rid of him.

*Tru.* You had never been, unless we had put his wife upon him. His humour is as tedious at last, as it was ridiculous at first.

*SCENE XI.*

*Truewit, Clerimont; to them, Haughty, Mrs. Otter, Mavis, Daw, La-Foole, Centaure, Epicæne.*

*Hau.* We wonder'd why you shriek'd so, Mr.

*Otter.*

*Mrs. Ott.* O God, madam, he came down with



a huge long naked weapon in both his hands, and look'd so dreadfully! sure he's beside himself.

*Mav.* Why, what made you there, Mrs. Otter?

*Mrs. Ott.* Alas, Mrs. Mavis, I was chastising my subject, and thought nothing of him.

*Daw.* Faith, mistress, you must do so too. Learn to chastise. Mistress Otter corrects her husband so, he dares not speak, but under correction.

*La-F.* And with his hat off to her: 'twould do you good to see.

*Hau.* In sadness, 'tis good and mature counsel; practise it, Morose. I'll call you Morose still now, as I call Centaure and Mavis; we four will be all one.

*Cen.* And you'll come to the college, and live with us?

*Hau.* Make him give milk and honey.

*Mav.* Look how you manage him at first, you shall have him ever after.

*Cen.* Let him allow you your coach and four horses, your woman, your chamber-maid, your page, your gentleman usher, your French cook, and four grooms.

*Hau.* And go with us to Bedlam, to the china-houses, and to the Exchange.

*Cen.* It will open the gate to your fame.

*Hau.* Here's Centaure has immortaliz'd herself  
with taming of her wild male.

*Mav.* She has done the miracle of the kingdom.

SCENE XII.

*The same ; to them, Morose, and Dauphine.*

*Mor.* O my cursed angel, that instructed me to  
this fate !

*Daupb.* Why, sir ?

*Mor.* That I should be seduced by so foolish a  
devil as a barber will make !

*Daupb.* I would I had been worthy, sir, to have  
partaken your counsel ; you should never have  
trusted it to such a minister.

*Mor.* Would I could redeem it with the loss of  
an eye, nephew.

*Daupb.* I hope there shall be no such need, sir.  
Take patience, good uncle. This is but a day, and  
'tis well worn too now.

*Mor.* O, 'twill be so for ever, nephew ; I fore-

see it, for ever. Strife and tumult are the dowry that comes with a wife.

*Epi.* How do you, sir?

*Mor.* Did you ever hear a more unnecessary question? as if she did not see! Why, I do as you see, empress, empress.

*Epi.* They say you are run mad, sir.

*Mor.* Not for love, I assure you, of you; do you see?

*Epi.* O Lord! gentlemen, lay hold on him, for God's sake. What shall I do? who's his physician, (can you tell?) that knows the state of his body best, that I might send for him. Good sir, speak; I'll send for one of my doctors else.

*Mor.* What, to poison me, that I might die intestate, and leave you possess'd of all?

*Epi.* Lord, how idly he talks, and how his eyes sparkle! he looks green about the temples! do you see what blue spots he has?

*Cler.* 'Tis melancholy.

*Epi.* Gentlemen, for heaven's sake counsel me.

*Daw.* The disease in Greek is called *μανία*, in Latin *insania*.

*Mor.* Shall I have a lecture read upon me alive?

*Epi.* What is this to the cure? We are sure enough of the disease.

*Mor.* Let me go.

*Tru.* Why, we'll entreat her to hold her peace, sir.

*Mor.* O no, labour not to stop her. She is like a conduit pipe, that will gush out with more force when she opens again.

*Epi.* Sure, he would do well enough if he could sleep.

*Mor.* No, I should do well enough, if you could sleep. Have I no friend that will make her drunk, or give her a little laudanum, or opium?

*Tru.* Why, sir, she talks ten times worse in her sleep.

*Mor.* How!

*Cler.* Do you not know that, sir? never ceases all night.

*Tru.* And snores like a porcpisce.

*Mor.* O redeem me, fate! redeem me, fate! For how many causes may a man be divorc'd, nephew?

*Dauph.* I know not, truly, sir.

*Tru.* Some divine must resolve you in that, sir, or canon-lawyer.

*Mor.* I will not rest, I will not think of any other hope or comfort, till I know.

[*Exeunt Morose, and Dauphine.*

*SCENE XIII.*

*Ladies, Epicæne, Truewit, Clerimont, Daw, and La-Foole.*

*Cler.* Alas, poor man !

*Tru.* You'll make him mad indeed, ladies, if you pursue this.

*Hau.* No, we'll let him breathe now, a quarter of an hour or so.

*Cler.* By my faith, a large truce.

*Hau.* Is that his keeper, that is gone with him ?

*Daw.* It is his nephew, madam.

*La-F.* Sir Dauphine Eugenie.

*Cen.* He looks like a very pitiful knight——

*Daw.* As can be. This marriage has put him out of all.

*La-F.* He has not a penny in his purse, madam——



*Daw.* He is ready to cry all this day.

*La-F.* A very shark ; he set me i' th' nick  
t'other night, at Primero.

*Tru.* How these swabbers talk ! [*Apart.*

*Cler.* Otter's wine has swell'd their humours  
above a spring-tide. [*Apart.*

*Hau.* Good Morose, let's go in again. I like  
your couches exceeding well ; we'll go lie and  
talk there.

*Epi.* I wait on you, madam.

[*Exeunt Daw, and La-Foole.*

#### *SCENE XIV.*

*Epicoene, Truewit, Clerimont.*

*Tru.* Do you hear, lady bride ? I pray thee  
now, as thou art a noble wench, continue this dis-  
course of Dauphine within ; but praise him ex-  
ceedingly ; magnify him with all the height of af-  
fection thou canst (I have some purpose in't) ;  
and but beat off these two rooks, Jack Daw, and  
his fellow, with any discontentment hither, and I'll  
honour thee for ever.

*Epi.* I warrant you; you shall expect one of 'em presently. [*Exit.*

SCENE XV.

*Truewit, Clerimont.*

*Cler.* What a cast of kastrils are these, to hawk after ladies thus?

*Tru.* And strike at such an eagle as Dauphine.

*Cler.* He will be mad when we tell him. Here he comes.

SCENE XVI.

*Clerimont, Truewit; to them, Dauphine.*

*Cler.* O sir, you are welcome.

*Tru.* Where's thine uncle.

*Daupb.* Run out of doors in's night-caps, to talk with a casuist about his divorce. It works admirably.

*Tru.* Thou would'st ha' said so, an' thou hadst been here! The ladies have laugh'd at thee most comically, since thou went'st, Dauphine.

*Cler.* And ask'd, if thou wert thine uncle's keeper.

*Tru.* And the brace of baboons answer'd, Yes; and said, thou wert a pitiful poor fellow, and didst live upon posts, and had'st nothing but three suits of apparel, and some few benevolences that the lords ga' thee to fool to 'em, and swagger.

*Daupb.* Let me not live, I'll beat 'em; I'll bind 'em both to grand-madam's bed-posts, and have 'em baited with monkeys.

*Tru.* Thou shalt not need, they shall be beaten to thy hand, Dauphine. I have an execution to serve upon 'em, I warrant thee shall serve; trust my plot.

*Daupb.* you have many plots! so you had one to make all the wenches in love with me.

*Tru.* Why, if I do it not yet afore night, as near as 'tis, and that they do not every one invite thee, and be ready to scratch for thee, take the mortgage of my wit.

*Cler.* 'Fore God, I'll be his witness thou shalt have it, Dauphine; thou shalt be his fool for ever, if thou dost not.

*Tru.* Agreed. Perhaps 'twill be the better estate.

360 SILENT WOMAN. L. 1709—1726. [*Act IV.*

Do you observe this gallery, or rather lobby, indeed? Here are a couple of studies, at each end one: here will I act such a tragi-comedy between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, Daw and La-Foole——which of 'em comes out first, will I seize on (you two shall be the chorus behind the arras, and whip out between the acts, and speak). If I do not make 'em keep the peace for this remnant of the day, if not of the year, I have failed once——I hear Daw coming: hide, and do not laugh, for God's sake. [*Exeunt Dauphine and Clerimont.*

### SCENE XVII.

*Truewit; to him, Daw.*

*Daw.* Which is the way into the garden, trow?

*Tru.* O, Jack Daw! I am glad I have met with you. In good faith, I must have this matter go no further between you: I must ha' it taken up.

*Daw.* What matter, sir? between whom?

*Tru.* Come, you disguise it, sir Amorous and you. If you love me, Jack, you shall make use of

your philosophy now, for this once, and deliver me your sword. The bride has entreated me I will see no blood shed at her bridal.

*Daw.* As I hope to finish Tacitus, I intend no murder.

*Tru.* Do you not wait for sir Amorous?

*Daw.* Not I, by my knighthood.

*Tru.* And your scholarship too?

*Daw.* And my scholarship too.

*Tru.* Go to, then I return you your sword, and ask you mercy; but put it not up, for you will be assaulted. I understood that you had apprehended it, and walk'd here to brave him; and that you had held your life contemptible, in regard of your honour.

*Daw.* No, no; no such thing, I assure you. He and I parted now, as good friends as could be.

*Tru.* Trust not you to that visor. I saw him since dinner with another face: I have known many men in my time vex'd with losses, with deaths, and with abuses; but so offended a wight as sir Amorous did I never see or read of. For taking away his guests, sir, to-day, that's the cause; and he declares it behind your back with such threat-



nings and contempts——He said to Dauphine, you were the arrant'st ass——

*Daw.* He may say his pleasure.

*Tru.* And swears, you are so protested a coward, that he knows you will never do him any manly or single right ; and therefore he will take his course.

*Daw.* I'll give him any satisfaction, sir—but fighting.

*Tru.* But who knows what satisfaction he'll take : blood he thirsts for, and blood he will have ; and whereabouts on you he will have it, who knows but himself?

*Daw.* I pray you, master Truewit, be you a mediator.

*Tru.* Well, sir, conceal yourself then in this study till I return [*he puts him up.*] Nay, you must be content to be lock'd in ; for, for mine own reputation, I would not have you seen to receive a public disgrace, while I have the matter in managing. Gods so, here he comes ; keep your breath close, that he do not hear you sigh.

SCENE XVIII.

*Truewit.*

*Tru.* In good faith, sir Amorous, he is not this way ; I pray you, be merciful, do not murder him : he is a Christian, as good as you : you are arm'd as if you sought revenge on all his race. Good Dauphine, get him away from this place. I never knew a man's choler so high, but he would speak to his friends, he would hear reason. Jack Daw, Jack ! asleep ?

*Daw.* Is he gone, master Truewit ?

*Tru.* Did you hear him ?

SCENE XIX.

*Truewit ; to him, Daw, coming out of the closet.*

*Daw.* O God, yes. But is he so arm'd as you say ?

*Tru.* Arm'd? did you ever see a fellow set out to take possession?—That may give you some light to conceive of him; but 'tis nothing to the principal. He has got somebody's old two-hand sword, to mow you off at the knees: and that sword hath spawn'd such a dagger!—But then he is so hung with pikes, halberds, petronels, callivers, and muskets, that he looks like a justice of peace's hall: a man of two thousand a year is not cess'd at so many weapons as he has on. You would think he meant to murder all St. Pulchre's parish. He is sufficiently arm'd to over-run a country.

*Daw.* Good Lord! what means he, sir? I pray you, master Truewit, be you a mediator.

*Tru.* You must think I'll do my best.

*Daw.* Good sir, do.

*[he puts him up again, and then comes forth.]*

SCENE XX.

*Truewit; to him, Clerimont, and Dauphine.*

*Cler.* What hast thou done?

*Tru.* He will let me do nothing, he does all afore me:—To your places.

*Cler.* I pray thee, let me be in at the other a little.

*Tru.* Look, you'll spoil all; these be ever your tricks.

*Cler.* No, but I could hit of some things that thou wilt miss, and thou wilt say are good ones.

*Tru.* I warrant you; I pray, forbear.

*Dauph.* Come away, Clerimont.

*[Exeunt Clerimont, and Dauphine.]*

SCENE XXI.

*Truewit; to him, La-Foole.*

*Tru.* Sir Amorous!

*La-F.* Master Truewit.

*Tru.* Whither were you going?

*La-F.* Down into the court.

*Tru.* By no means, sir.

*La-F.* Why, sir?

*Tru.* Enter here, if you love your life.

*La-F.* Why! why!

*Tru.* Question till your throat be cut, do: dally till the enraged soul find you.

*La-F.* Who's that?

*Tru.* Daw it is: will you in?

*La-F.* I'll in: what's the matter?

*Tru.* Nay, if he had been cool enough to tell us that, there had been some hope to atone you; but he seems so implacably enrag'd.

*La-F.* 'Slight, let him rage: I'll hide myself.

*Tru.* Do, good sir. But what have you done to him within, that should provoke him thus? You have broke some jest upon him afore the ladies——

*La-F.* Not I, never in my life, broke jest upon any man. The bride was praising sir Dauphine, and he went away in snuff, and I followed him; unless he took offence at me in his drink erewhile, that I would not pledge all the horse full.

*Tru.* By my faith, and that may be; you remember well: but he walks the round up and down,



through every room o' the house, with a towel in his hand, crying, where's La-Foole? who saw La-Foole? And when Dauphine and I demanded the cause, we can force no answer from him, but [O revenge, how sweet art thou! I will strangle him in this towel] which leads us to conjecture, that the main cause of his fury is, for bringing your meat to-day, with a towel about you, to his discredit.

*La-F.* Like enough. Why, an' he be angry for that, I'll stay here till his anger be blown over.

*Tru.* A good becoming resolution, sir; if you can put it on o' the sudden.

*La-F.* Yes, I can put it on: or, I'll away into the country presently.

*Tru.* How will you go out o' the house, sir? he knows you are i' the house, and he'll watch you this se'ennight, but he'll have you: he'll outwait a serjeant for you.

*La-F.* Why, then I'll stay here.

*Tru.* You must think how to victual yourself in time then.

*La-F.* Why, sweet master Truewit, will you entreat my cousin Otter to send me a cold venison pasty, a bottle or two of wine, and a pallet to lie on.

*Tru.* O, I would not advise thee to sleep, by any means.

*La-F.* Would you not, sir? why, then I will not.

*Tru.* Yet there's another fear——

*La-F.* Is there? what is't?

*Tru.* No, he cannot break open this door with his foot, sure.

*La-F.* I'll set my back against it, sir. I have a good back.

*Tru.* Cast you the worst. He has sent for powder already, and what he will do with it, no man knows: perhaps blow up the corner of the house where he suspects you are.—Think upon some satisfaction, or terms to offer him.

*La-F.* Sir, I'll give him any satisfaction: I dare give any terms.

*Tru.* You'll leave it to me then?

*La-F.* I'll stand to any conditions.

[*Exit La-Foole.*

SCENE XXII.

*Truewit ; to him, Clerimont, and Dauphine.*

*Tru.* Had it not been pity these two should ha' been conceal'd?

*Cler.* Shall I go fetch the ladies to the catastrophe?

*Tru.* Umh? Do, Clerimont, fetch 'em, and discourse to 'em all that's past, and bring 'em into the gallery here.

*Daupb.* This is thy extreme vanity now: thou think'st thou wert undone, if every jest thou mak'st were not publish'd.

*Tru.* Thou shalt see how unjust thou art presently. Clerimont, say it was Dauphine's plot. Trust me not, if the whole drift be not for thy good. There, with this scarf over thy face, be ready when I call Amorous. Away——John Daw?

*[Exeunt Daupb. and Cler.]*

SCENE XXIII.

*Truewit; to him, Daw.*

*Daw.* What good news, sir?

*Tru.* Faith, I have followed and argued with him hard for you. I told him, you were a knight and a scholar, and that you knew fortitude did consist *magis patiendo quam faciendo, magis ferendo quam feriendo.*

*Daw.* It doth so indeed, sir.

*Tru.* He is to come here in disguise, give you five kicks in private, sir; take your sword from you, and lock you up in that study during pleasure: which will be but a little while, we'll get it releas'd presently.

*Daw.* Five kicks? he shall ha' six, sir, to be friends.

*Tru.* Believe me, you shall not over-shoot yourself, to send him that word by me.

*Daw.* Deliver it, sir; he shall have it with all my heart, to be friends.

*Tru.* Friends? Nay, an' he should not be so, and

heartily too, upon these terms, he shall have me to enemy while I live. Come, sir, bear it bravely.

*Daw.* O God, sir, 'tis nothing.

*Tru.* True. What's six kicks to a man that reads Seneca?

*Daw.* I have had a hundred, sir.

*Tru.* Sir Amorous. No speaking one to another, or rehearsing old matters.

*SCENE XXIV.*

*Truewit, Daw; to them, Ladies, brought by Clerimont, and Dauphine, who comes forth and kicks Daw.*

*Daw.* One, two, three, four, five. I protest, sir Amorous, you shall have six.

*Tru.* Nay, I told you, you should not talk. Come, give him six, an' he will needs. Your sword. Now, return to your safe custody; you shall presently meet afore the ladies, and be the dearest friends one to another.

[*Exit Daw.*



SCENE XXV.

*Truewit, Daupbine; Ladies, and Clerimont behind.*

*Tru.* Give me the scarf now, thou shalt beat the other bare-fac'd. Stand by: sir Amorous!

[*Exit Daupbine.*

SCENE XXVI.

*Truewit, Ladies, and Clerimont; to them, La-Foole.*

*La-F.* What's here?

*Tru.* You must submit yourself to be hoodwink'd in this scarf, and be led to him, where he will take your sword from you, and make you bear a blow over the mouth, gules, and tweaks by the nose *sans nombre.*

*La-F.* I am content. But why must I be blinded?

*Tru.* That's for your good, sir; because if he should grow insolent upon this, and publish it here-

after to your disgrace (which I hope he will not do) you might swear safely, and protest, he never beat you, to your knowledge.

*La-F.* O, I conceive.

*Tru.* I do not doubt but you'll be perfect good friends upon't, and not dare to utter an ill thought one of another in future.

*La-F.* Not I, as God help me, of him.

*Tru.* Nor he of you, sir. If he should——Come sir. All hid, sir John.

SCENE XXVII.

*The same; to them, Dauphine, who goes to tweak La-Foole.*

*La-F.* Oh, sir John, sir John. Oh, o-o-o-o-o-Oh——

*Tru.* Good sir John, leave tweaking, you'll blow his nose off. 'Tis sir John's pleasure, you should retire into the study. Why, now you are friends. All bitterness between you, I hope, is buried; you shall come forth by and by, Damon and Pythias upon't, and embrace with all the rankness of friendship that

can be. I trust we shall have 'em tamer i' their language hereafter. [Exit La-Foole.

## SCENE XXVIII.

*Truewit, Dauphine, Ladies, Clerimont, and Epicoene, who come forward.*

*Tru.* Dauphine, I worship thee. God's will, the ladies have surpris'd us.

*Hau.* Centaure, how our judgments were impos'd on by these adulterate knights! Sir Dauphine is valiant, and a wit too, it seems. [Apart.

*Mav.* And a bravery too: [Apart.

*Hau.* Was this his project? [Apart.

*Mrs. Ott.* So master Clerimont intimates, madam. [Apart.

*Hau.* Good Morose, when you come to the college, will you bring him with you? he seems a very perfect gentleman. [Apart.

*Mav.* He is a very worthy gentleman, madam. [Apart.

*Hau.* But sir Dauphine's carelessness becomes him. [Apart.

*Cen.* I could love a man for such a nose! [*Apart.*

*Mav.* Or such a leg! [*Apart.*

*Cen.* He has an exceeding good eye, madam.

[*Apart.*

*Mav.* And a very good lock! [*Apart.*

*Tru.* See how they eye thee, man! they are taken,  
I warrant thee. [*Apart.*

*Hau.* You have unbrac'd our brace of knights here,  
master Truewit.

*Tru.* Not I, madam; it was sir Dauphine's engine.

*Hau.* I am glad of the fortune (beside the discovery  
of two such empty caskets) to gain the knowledge of  
so rich a mine of virtue as sir Dauphine.

*Cen.* We would be all glad to style him of our  
friendship, and see him at the college.

*Mav.* He cannot mix with a sweeter society, I'll  
prophecy: and I hope he himself will think so.

*Dauph.* I should be rude to imagine otherwise,  
lady.

*Tru.* Did not I tell thee, Dauphine? But pursue  
it now thou hast 'em. [*Apart.*

*Hau.* Shall we go in again, Morose?

*Epi.* Yes, madam.

*Cen.* We'll entreat sir Dauphine's company.

*Tru.* Stay, good madam, the interview of the two friends, Pylades and Orestes: I'll fetch 'em out to you straight.

*Hau.* Will you, master Truewit?

*Dauph.* But noble ladies, do not confess in your countenance, or outward bearing to 'em, any discovery of their follies, that we may see how they will bear up again.

*Hau.* We will not, sir Dauphine.

*Cen. Mar.* Upon our honours, sir Dauphine.

*Tru.* Sir Amorous, sir Amorous! the ladies are here.

*La-F.* Are they? [peeping.

*Tru.* Yes; but slip out by and by, as their backs are turn'd, and meet sir John here, as by chance, when I call you. Jack Daw.

*Daw.* What say you, sir? [peeping.

*Tru.* Whip out behind me suddenly, and no anger i' your looks to your adversary. Now, now.



SCENE XXIX.

*Truewit, Dauphine, Ladies, Clerimont, and Epicœne ; to them, La-Foole, and Daw.*

*La-F.* Noble sir John Daw! where ha' you been?

*Daw.* To seek you, sir Amorous.

*La-F.* Me! I honour you.

*Daw.* I prevent you, sir.

*Cler.* They have forgot their rapiers.

*Tru.* O, they meet in peace, man.

*Dauph.* Where's your sword, sir John?

*Cler.* And yours, sir Amorous?

*Daw.* Mine! my boy had it forth, to mend the handle, e'en now.

*La-F.* And my gold handle was broke too, and my boy had it forth.

*Dauph.* Indeed, sir? [*Exeunt Daw and La-F,*

## SCENE XXX.

*The same.\***Dauph.* How their excuses meet!*Cler.* What a consent there is i' the handles!

\* It may have been observed, that by this expression I aim to obviate the inconvenience remarked by Mr. Pye, in the old mode of printing our plays, and avoid repetition, where the names, being to be found only a page or two back, of course do not require it. It may have been observed too, that I have attempted an improvement on this French and Greek mode, by inserting the words “to them” or “to him” between the names, distinguishing those who remain, and who enter. This surely gives perspicuity to the piece; as does likewise this division of it into separate scenes, which has all the effect of framing pictures on similar subjects, hanging close to one another in a painter’s room. Thus the reader and the actor may perhaps have a more distinct idea of every scene, and clearly see that principal situation to which it tends, and in representing which it forms a picture. This custom, is taking much less liberty with an author than the arbitrary division of a poem, or a treatise, into books or chapters. It has to do merely with printing, and *cannot* give a different stress to any part of his composition, from that which he intended. I could

*Tru.* Nay, there is so i' the points too, I warrant you.

*Mrs. Ott.* O me! madam, he comes again, the madman! Away. *[Exeunt Ladies.]*

*SCENE XXXI.*

*Truewit, Clerimont, Dauphine; to them, Morose.*

*Mor.* What make these naked weapons here, gentlemen?

*[he had found the two swords drawn within.]*

*Tru.* O sir! here hath like to have been murder since you went! a couple of knights fallen out about the bride's favours. Clerimont, carry 'em their swords now. They have done all the hurt they will do.

*[Exit Clerimont.]*

wish therefore all dramatic works were printed in this manner, as more alluring to their readers, and therefore without doubt more eligible to their authors.

SCENE XXXII.

*Morose, Truewit, Dauphine.*

*Dauph.* Ha' you spoke with the lawyer, sir?

*Mor.* O, no! there is such a noise i' the court, that they have frighted me home with more violence than I went! such speaking and counter-speaking, with their several voices of citations, appellations, allegations, certificates, attachments, interrogatories, references, convictions, and afflictions indeed, among the doctors and proctors! that the noise here is silence to't! a kind of calm midnight!

*Tru.* Sir, if you would be resolv'd indeed, I can bring you hither a very sufficient lawyer, and a learned divine, that shall inquire into every least scruple for you.

*Mor.* Can you, master Truewit?

*Tru.* Yes, and are very sober, grave persons, that will dispatch it in a chamber, with a whisper or two.

*Mor.* Good sir, shall I hope this benefit from you, and trust myself into your hands?

*Tru.* Alas, sir! your nephew and I have been

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asham'd, and oft-times mad, since you went, to think how you are abus'd. Go in, good sir, and lock yourself up till we call you; we'll tell you more anon, sir.

*Mor.* Do your pleasure with me, gentlemen; I believe in you, and that deserves no delusion——[*Exit.*

*SCENE XXXIII.*

*Truewit, Dauphine.*

*Tru.* You shall find none, sir; but heap'd, heap'd plenty of vexation.

*Daupb.* What wilt thou do now, Wit?

*Tru.* Recover me hither Otter and the barber, if you can, by any means, presently.

*Daupb.* Why? to what purpose?

*Tru.* O, I'll make the deepest divine, and gravest lawyer, out o' them two, for him——

*Daupb.* Thou can'st not, man; these are waking dreams.

*Tru.* Do not fear me. Clap but a civil gown with a welt o' the one, and a canonical cloak with sleeves o' the other, and give 'em a few terms i' their mouths,



if there come not forth as able a doctor, and complete a parson, for this turn, as may be wish'd, trust not my election. The barber smatters Latin, I remember.

*Daupb.* Yes, and Otter too.

*Tru.* Well then, if I make 'em not wrangle out this case, to his no comfort, let me be thought a Jack Daw, or La-Foole, or any thing worse. Go you to your ladies, but first send for them.

*Daupb.* I will.

[*Exeunt.*

*ACT V. SCENE I.*

*La-Foole, Clerimont, Daw.*

*La-F.* Where had you our swords, master Clerimont?

*Cler.* Why, Dauphine took 'em from the madman.

*La-F.* And he took 'em from our boys, I warrant you?

*Cler.* Very like, sir.

*La-F.* Thank you, good master Clerimont. Sir John Daw and I are beholden to you.

*Cler.* Would I knew how to make you so, gentlemen.

*Daw.* Sir Amorous and I are your servants, sir.

*Cler.* Faith, now we are in private, let's wanton it a little, and talk waggishly. Sir John, I am telling sir Amorous here, that you two govern the ladies where'er you come. You are the prime men in their affections.

*Daw.* Not I, sir Amorous is.

*La-F.* I protest, sir John is.

*Cler.* Well, agree on't together, knights; for between you, you divide the kingdom, or commonwealth of ladies' affections: I see it, and can perceive a little how they observe you, and fear you, indeed. You could tell strange stories, my masters, if you would, I know.

*Daw.* Faith, we have seen somewhat, sir.

*La-F.* That we have——velvet petticoats, and wrought smocks, or so.

*Daw.* And——

*Cler.* Nay, out with it, sir John.

*Daw.* Why—a—do you speak, sir Amorous.

*La-F.* No, do you, sir John Daw.

*Daw.* I' faith, you shall.

*La-F.* I' faith, you shall.

*Daw.* Why, we have been——

*La-F.* In the great bed at Ware together in our time. On, sir John.

*Cler.* Do you hear, sir John? you shall tell me but one thing truly, as you love me.

*Daw.* If I can, I will, sir.

*Cler.* You lay in the same house with the bride here?

*Daw.* Yes, and convers'd with her hourly, sir.

*Cler.* And what humour is she of? Is she coming and open, free?

*Daw.* O, exceeding open, sir. I was her servant, and sir Amorous was to be.

*Cler.* Come, you have both had favours from her: I know, and have heard so much.

*Daw.* O, no, sir.

*La-F.* You shall excuse us, sir; we must not wound reputation.

*Cler.* Tut, she is married now, and therefore speak plainly: which of you led first? ha?

*La-F.* Sir John, indeed.

*Daw.* O, it pleases him to say so, sir; but sir Amorous knows as well.

*Cler.* Dost thou, i' faith, Amorous?

*La-F.* In a manner, sir.

*Cler.* Why, I commend you, lads. Little knows Don Bridegroom of this; nor shall he, for me.

*Daw.* Hang him, mad ox.

*Cler.* Speak softly, here comes his nephew, with the lady Haughty: he'll get the ladies from you, sirs, if you look not to him in time.

*La-F.* Why, if he do, we'll fetch 'em home again, I warrant you. *[Exeunt Daw and La-Foole.*

SCENE II.

*Clerimont ; to him, Haughty, and Dauphine.*

*Hau.* Sir, I can distinguish gems from pebbles—and howsoever I may suffer in such a judgment as yours, by admitting equality of rank or society with Centaure or Mavis——

*Dauph.* You do not, madam ; I perceive they are your mere foils.

*Hau.* Then are you a friend to truth, sir ; it makes me love you the more. It is not the outward, but the inward man that I affect. They are not apprehensive of an eminent perfection, but love flat and dully.

SCENE III.

*The same ; to them Centaure.*

*Cen.* Where are you, my lady Haughty ?

*Hau.* I come presently. Where's Mavis, Centaure ?



*Cen.* Within, madam, a writing. I'll follow you presently : I'll but speak a word with sir Dauphine.

[*Exit Haughty.*]

SCENE IV.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Centaure.*

*Dauph.* With me, madam ?

*Cen.* Good sir Dauphine, do not trust Haughty, nor make any credit to her, whatever you do besides. Sir Dauphine, I give you this caution, she is a perfect courtier, and loves nobody but for her uses ; and for her uses, she loves all. Here comes Mavis, a worse face than she ! you would not like this by candlelight. If you'll come to my chamber one o' these mornings early, or late in an evening, I'll tell you more. [*Apart.*]

SCENE V.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Centaure ; to them, Mavis.*

*Cen.* Where's Haughty, Mavis?

*Mav.* Within, Centaure.

*Cen.* What ha' you there?

*Mav.* An Italian riddle for sir Dauphine (you shall not see it i'faith, Centaure). Good sir Dauphine, solve it for me. [Exeunt ladies.

SCENE VI

*Clerimont, Dauphine.*

*Cler.* [advancing.] How now, Dauphine? how dost thou quit thyself of these females?

*Daupb.* 'Slight, they haunt me like fairies, and give me jewels here; I cannot be rid of 'em.

*Cler.* O, you must not tell though.

*Daupb.* Mass, I forgot that; one brings me a riddle here.

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*Cler.* A riddle? pray, let me see't.

*[he reads the paper.]*

“ Sir Dauphine, I chose this way of intimation  
“ for privacy. The ladies hope and purpose to  
“ make a collegiate and servant of you. Might I  
“ be honour'd, as to appear at any end of so noble  
“ a work, I would——continue four or five days,  
“ for your visitation. MAVIS.”

Call you this a riddle? what's their plain-dealing,  
trow? *[laughing.]*

### SCENE VII.

*Clerimont, Dauphine ; to them, Truewit, Otter,  
Cutbeard.*

*Tru.* O, are you here? Come, Dauphine ; go,  
call your uncle presently : I have fitted my divine  
and my canonist, dyed their beards and all.

*[Exit Dauphine.]*

## SCENE VIII.

*Clerimont, Truewit, Otter, Cutbeard.*

*Tru.* Come, master doctor, and master parson, look to your parts now, and discharge 'em bravely ; you are well set forth, perform it as well. If you chance to be out, do not confess it with standing still, or humming, or gaping one at another ; but go on, and talk aloud, and eagerly ; use vehement action, and only remember your terms, and you are safe. Here he comes : set your faces, and look superciliously, while I present you.

## SCENE IX.

*The same ; to them, Morose, and Dauphine.*

*Mor.* Are these the two learned men ?

*Tru.* Yes, sir ; please you, salute 'em.

*Mor.* Salute 'em ? I had rather do any thing, than wear out time so unfruitfully, sir.

*Tru.* We'll go to the matter, then. Gentlemen, master doctor, and master parson, I have acquainted you sufficiently with the business for which you are come hither; and you are not now to inform yourselves in the state of the question, I know. This is the gentleman who expects your resolution, and therefore when you please, begin.

*Ott.* Please you, master doctor.

*Cut.* Please you, good master parson.

*Ott.* I would hear the canon-law speak first.

*Cut.* It must give place to positive divinity, sir.

*Mor.* Nay, good gentlemen, do not throw me into circumstances. Let your comforts arrive quickly at me, those that are. Be swift in affording me my peace, if so I shall hope any. And for the cause of noise, I am now a suitor to you. You do not know in what a misery I have been exercis'd this day, what a torrent of evil! my very house turns round with the tumult! I dwell in a windmill! the perpetual motion is here.

*Tru.* Well, good master doctor, will you break the ice? master parson will wade after.



*Cut.* Sir, though unworthy, and the weaker, I will presume.

*Ott.* 'Tis no presumption, *domine* doctor.

*Mor.* Yet again!

*Cut.* Your question 'is, For how many causes a man may have *divortium legitimum*, a lawful divorce. First, you must understand the nature of the word divorce, *à divertendo*.——

*Mor.* No excursions upon words, good doctor; to the question briefly.

*Cut.* I answer then, the canon-law affords divorce but in few cases; and the principal is in the common case, the adulterous case: but there are *duodecim impedimenta*, twelve impediments (as we call 'em), all which do not *dirimere contractum*, but *irritum reddere matrimonium*, as we say in the canon-law, *not take away the bond, but cause a nullity therein*.

*Mor.* I understood you before: good sir, avoid your impertinency of translation.

*Ott.* He cannot open this too much, sir, by your favour.

*Mor.* Yet more!

*Tru.* O, you must give the learned men leave, sir. To your impediments, master doctor.

*Cut.* The first is *impedimentum erroris*.

*Ott.* Of which there are several species.

*Cut.* As *error personæ*.

*Ott.* If you contract yourself to one person thinking her another.

*Cut.* Then, *error fortunæ*.

*Ott.* If she be a beggar, and you thought her rich.

*Cut.* Then, *error qualitatis*.

*Ott.* If she prove stubborn or headstrong, that you thought obedient.

*Mor.* How? is that, sir, a lawful impediment? one at once, I pray you, gentlemen.

*Ott.* *Ante copulam*, but not *post copulam*, sir.

*Tru.* Alas, sir, what a hope are we fall'n from by this time.

*Cut.* The next is *conditio*. The third is *votum*. The fourth is *cognatio*: if the persons be of kin within the degrees.

*Ott.* Do you know what the degrees are, sir?

*Mor.* No, nor I care not, sir; they offer me no comfort in the question, I am sure.

*Cut.* But there is a branch of this impediment may, which is *cognatio spiritualis*: if you were her god-father, sir, then the marriage is incestuous.

*Mor.* O me! to end the controversy, I never was a god-father, I never was a god-father in my life, sir. Pass to the next.

*Cut.* The fifth is *crimen adulterii*; the known case. The sixth, *cultus disparitas*, difference of religion: have you ever examined her, what religion she is of?

*Mor.* No, I would rather she were of none, than be put to the trouble of it.

*Cut.* The seventh is, *vis*: if it were upon compulsion, or force.

*Mor.* O no, it was too voluntary, mine; too voluntary.

*Cut.* The eighth is, *ordo*; if ever she have taken holy orders.

*Ott.* That's superstitious.

*Mor.* No matter, master parson; would she would go into a nunnery yet.

*Cut.* The ninth is, *ligamen*; if you were bound, sir, to any other before.

*Mor.* I thrust myself too soon into these fetters.

*Cut.* The tenth is, *publica honestas*.

*Ott.* And is but *leve impedimentum*.

*Cut.* The eleventh is, *affinitas ex fornicatione*.

Ott. Which is no less *vera affinitas*, than the other, master doctor.

Cut. True, *quæ oritur ex legitimo matrimonio*.

Ott. You say right, venerable doctor: and *nascitur ex eo, quod per conjugium duæ personæ efficiuntur una caro*——

Mor. Hey day, now they begin.

Cut. I conceive you, master parson: *ita æque est verus pater*.

Ott. *Et vere filius qui sic generatur*——

Mor. What's all this to me?

Cut. The twelfth and last is, *si forte*——

#### SCENE X.

Clerimont, Dauphine, Truewit, Otter, Cutbeard,  
Morose; to them, Epicæne, Ladies, Daw, La-  
Foole.

Epi. I will not endure it any longer. Ladies, I beseech you, help me. This is such a wrong as never was offered to poor bride before: upon her marriage-day to have her husband conspire against her, and a couple of mercenary companions to be brought in for

form's sake, to persuade a separation! If you had blood or virtue in you, gentlemen, you would not suffer such earwigs about a husband, or scorpions to creep between man and wife——

*Mor.* O the variety and changes of my torment!

*Hau.* Let 'em be cudgell'd out of doors by our grooms.

*Cen.* I'll lend you my footman.

*Mav.* We'll have our men blanket 'em i' the hall.

*Mrs. Ott.* As there was one at our house, madam, for peeping in at the door.

*Daw.* Content, i'faith.

*Tru.* Stay, ladies and gentlemen; you'll hear, before you proceed?

*Mav.* I'd ha' the bridegroom blanketed too.

*Cen.* Begin with him first.

*Hau.* Yes, by my troth.

*Mor.* O mankind generation!

*Daupb.* Ladies, for my sake forbear.

*Hau.* Yes, for sir Dauphine's sake.

*Cen.* He shall command us.

*Daupb.* Come, I see now plain confederacy in this doctor and this parson, to abuse a gentleman. You study his affliction. Sir, will it please you hear me?



*Mor.* O do not talk to me; take not from me the pleasure of dying in silence, nephew.

*Daupb.* Sir, I must speak to you. If I free you of this unhappy match absolutely, and instantly, after all this trouble, and almost in your despair, now——

*Mor.* (It cannot be.)

*Daupb.* Sir, that you be never troubled with a murmur of it more, shall I have your favour perfect to me, and love hereafter?

*Mor.* That, and any thing beside. Make thine own conditions.

*Epi.* Will sir Dauphine be mine enemy too?

*Daupb.* You know I have been long a suitor to you, uncle, that out of your estate, which is fifteen hundred a year, you would allow me but five hundred during life, and assure the rest upon me after; to which I have often, by myself and friends, tender'd you a writing to sign, which you would never consent or incline to. If you please but to effect it now——

*Mor.* Thou shalt have it, nephew; I will do it, and more.

*Daupb.* If I quit you not presently, and for ever, of this cumber, you shall have power instantly, afore

all these, to revoke your act, and I will become whose slave you will give me to, for ever.

*Mor.* Where is the writing? I will seal to it, that, or to a blank, and write thine own conditions.

*Epi.* O me, most unfortunate wretched gentlewoman!

*Hau.* Will sir Dauphine do this?

*Epi.* Good sir, have some compassion on me.

*Mor.* O, my nephew knows you, belike; away, crocodile.

*Cen.* He does it not, sure, without good ground.

*Daupb.* Here, sir.

*Mor.* Come, nephew, give me the pen; I will subscribe to any thing, and seal to what thou wilt, for my deliverance. Thou art my restorer. Here I deliver it thee as my deed. If there be a word in it lacking, or writ with false orthography, I protest before—— I will not take the advantage.

*Daupb.* Then here is your release, sir; [*he takes off Epiccæne's peruke.*] you have married a boy, a gentleman's son, that I have brought up this half year, at my great charges, and for this composition, which I have now made with you.\* What say you, master

\* This is one of those incidents which, considered in them-

doctor? This is *justum impedimentum*, I hope, *error personæ*?

Ott. Yes, sir, *in primo gradu*.

Cut. *In primo gradu*.

Dauph. I thank you, good doctor Cutbeard, and parson Otter. [*he pulls off their beards and disguise.*] You are beholden to 'em, sir, that have taken this pains for you, and my friend master Truewit, who enabled 'em for the business. [*Exit Morose.*

selves, are too *unusual* to give a forcible idea of manners; though it is made to have a singularly happy effect on the plot. Here may, I think, be seen a great difference between tragedy and comedy; as may also in another circumstance, which is, that a scene, picturesque from grand or beautiful, rather than characteristic objects, (striking, for instance, like the spectacle witnessed by the Athenian people at the opening of *Œdipus*) can be a desideratum only in tragedy. Sublimity and grace, which elevate the mind, co-operate in producing the effect of *action*, but may distract in the mere contemplation of the truth of *manners*; in the display of which we ought to *stop* at the principles of propriety, and variety.

## SCENE XI.

*Clerimont, Dauphine, Truewit, Otter, Cutbeard,  
Ladies, Daw, and La-Foole.*

*Dauph.* Cutbeard, I'll make your lease good. Thank me not, but with your leg, Cutbeard. And, Tom Otter, your princess shall be reconcil'd to you. How now, gentlemen, do you look at me?

*Cler.* A boy!

*Dauph.* Yes, mistress Epicœne.

*Tru.* Well, Dauphine, you have lurch'd your friends of the better half of the garland, by concealing this part of the plot: but much good do it thee, thou deserv'st it, lad. And, Clerimont, for thy unexpected bringing these two to confession, wear my part of it freely. Nay, sir Daw, and sir La-Foole, you see the gentlewoman that has done you the favours! we are all thankful to you, and so should the woman-kind here. This Amazon, the champion of the sex, should beat you thriftily, for the common slanders which ladies receive from such cuckows as you are. Away, you

*Act V.]* SILENT WOMAN. L. 2423—2432. 401

common moths of these, and all ladies' honours, you deserve to live in air as corrupted as that where-with you feed rumour. Madams, take heed of such hereafter. And let it not trouble you, that you have discovered any mysteries to this young gentleman. In the mean time, we'll all undertake for his secrecy, that can speak so well of his silence. Spectators, if you like this comedy, rise cheerfully, and now Morose is gone in, clap your hands. It may be, that noise will cure him, at least please him.

[*Exeunt.*

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IF we contemplate so much of this play as lies in the house of Morose, possessing, as it does, that *liaison des scènes*, by which the stage never remains empty, and which, by attracting equally in every part of the piece, must necessarily assist its effect as a whole, and the more as to this merit is added all the *English* action; perspicuous too as it is in plot, and genuine in humour, I think it will be allowed not only to discover a degree, perhaps



unparalleled in comedy, of mechanical excellence, but to form no trifling part of the proof on which the Bishop of Worcester's arguments rest, of modern improvement in that species of composition. Concerning this question a few words may not be superfluous. The Bishop observes that, during the prevalence of the old Greek comedy, and in the time of Aristotle, comedy had no other object than that of farce, namely, ridicule; and in order to prove this, remarks, that Menander, the most eminent writer of the new comedy (which aimed at painting manners) was posterior to him. Lessing, who allows that on some of these questions the Bishop has thrown more light than any critic, yet says in answer; first, that Philemon, an earlier writer of the new comedy, was a cotemporary of Aristotle; and secondly, that even in the old comedy, Aristophanes had written in every sort of style known to the Greeks. However this may be, the Bishop's observation has not, as I know of, been disputed, that what he terms "elegant, but high humour," was unknown to the ancients. He is of opinion, that when Cæsar praises Terence so highly for *balf* the merit of Menander, it was not that the latter

had more of that quality ; but that writing in the Greek language, he was enabled to give his style a mellowness, and a peculiar character, which Terence wanted the same facility of doing. By *comic force*, he supposes Cæsar only meant that laughable and jocose strain of comic writing which had always been in use. This interpretation may not seem to accord with what I have said in the note to verse 608 of the Art of English Poetry ; but it in fact does, equally as well as the other. Those who are not sensible of any merit in *language* compared with *thought*, will probably testify contempt of *purity*, compared with *the other qualities*, of language.

If the reader will cast his eye over this play, as adapted by Colman to representation, and as I have altered it, at the same time, he will perceive that the managers indeed reduce plays so as to leave less unnecessary parts than the Greek, French, or even English plays contain : but I go farther, as the principles I proceed upon arrest the attention of an audience, without the variety of change of scene, and by the simple energy of the plot.

When I supposed, in my note to verse 551 of the Art of English Poetry, the case of Shakspeare

writing critical treatises, as the French tragedians have done, I might have compared him to Newton, who is equally famed for making discoveries in the heavens, and for improving the structure of that instrument by which he made them. There is an uncommon degree of prejudice against the idea of any kind of reflection, either in poetry or criticism, and an opinion has been entertained, that there is nothing mechanical in the production of works of fancy. This mistake seems to arise from the want of a thorough consideration of the case, tending to distinguish what is and what is not so. Every person will allow, that to write poetry is not to write prose; and therefore here is at least a rule to *restrain* us so much, that we are not to form our sentences in the usual manner. This being the case, nothing is more consonant to reason than that being obliged to deviate from the usual mode, we should aim, and countenance others who aim, at preserving the complete character of that deviation. If the poet's propensity be to *sow his wild oats*, the critic, like a mild monitor, should be indulgent to failings where there is worth at bottom, but should preserve the gravity of his character, and not ap-

plaud him for those very failings, even though he obtain the reputation of a *jolly old fellow*. Suppose that, travelling through a country, I fall into conversation with a person who lives in, and knows it; and that finding the road I intend to take, he tells me there is a shorter and a pleasanter, only rather up hill. This man gives me a rule; but instead of confining me, he increases my *liberty*. Ignorance of one of the roads restrained me to that single one I knew before; but now I have the choice of two. This is an exact description of genuine criticism. But suppose that, in the spirit either of a French critic, or a French justice of peace, he arrests me for a vagrant, I then shall have really a right to complain; though till then, I shall do very wrong in representing his civility as injustice.

I cannot forbear protesting here against an opinion that has appeared in a late Review; which is, that it shows cold and tasteless criticism to analyze a work, and reason methodically upon its parts. The same distinction ought to be made in criticism, in this respect, as I have above recommended in poetry. The effort of taste, for which impulse

alone ought to be trusted, is made previous to the delivery of any sentiment on the work. Afterwards it matters not how much reasoning takes place; for it is acknowledged, that he who feels most forcibly, can express himself most clearly, which is a rule favourable to the utmost ratiocination in criticism. It is only necessary for the critic to see that his *analytical* observations are not anticipated by his *synthetical* conclusions. The want of a similar care is the most fatally visible in the new political opinions. Instead of waiting for the casual knowledge derived to us from experiment, through the medium of impulse, to be afterwards arranged in its true and natural order, we seek it in the first instance, arranged by the imaginations of French philosophers; and, as the clear part of our reasoning is then at the beginning, so at the end we light not only on confusion, but on calamity, bloodshed, and destruction.



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SÉMIRAMIS.

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## ACTEURS.

SE'MIRAMIS, *Reine de Babylone.*

ARZACE ou NINIAS,  *fils de Sémiramis.*

AZE'MA, *Princesse du sang de Bélus.*

ASSUR, *Prince du sang de Bélus.*

OROE'S, *Grand-Prêtre.*

OTANE, *Ministre attaché à Sémiramis.*

MITRANE, *ami d'Arzace.*

CE'DAR, *attaché à Assur.*

*Gardes, Mages, Esclaves, Suite.*

# SÉMIRAMIS.

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## ACTE I. SCENE I.

*Le théâtre représente un vaste péristyle, au fond duquel est le palais de Sémiramis. Les jardins en terrasse sont élevés au-dessus du palais ; le temple des Mages est à droite, et un mausolée à gauche, orné d'obélisques.*

*Arzace, Mitrane.*

*Deux esclaves portent une cassette dans le lointain.*

VERS 1—4.

ARZACE.

OUI, Mitrane, en secret l'ordre émané du trône,  
Remet entre tes bras Arzace à Babylone.  
Que la reine en ces lieux, brillant de sa splendeur,  
De son puissant génie imprime la grandeur !

Je vais dans son éclat voir cette reine heureuse.\*

*Mit.* La renommée, Arzace, est souvent bien  
trompeuse ;

Et peut-être avec moi bientôt vous gémirez,  
Quand vous verrez de près ce que vous admirez.

*Ar.* Comment ?

\* I may be thought in some instances in this play to have lopped off too much of the elegant language of Voltaire ; but I shall not have much to regret, as I certainly have not lopped off any thing highly and strikingly dramatic. I wish, in a late French translation of Jane Shore, the most pathetic expressions in the scene between Shore and his wife had not been omitted. Even the ingenious author of the *Mémoires de Petrarque* had enough of the French taste not to translate, as I did, the whole of the sonnet describing his dream ; the reason being “ *parceque ce n'étoit pas noble.*” I think I shall not be answerable for the whole bad effect of the play in its present form. When an author can lurk behind his language, it is a temptation to him sometimes to forbear exerting himself ; and the voluminous works of Voltaire, all brilliant, but not all solid, demonstrate how much he often trusted to his powers of style. We see therefore a poet might have done well to conduct himself like a cotemporary painter. “ My success,” says Sir Joshua Reynolds, “ may be ascribed to a principle of honesty, which in this, as in all other instances, is certainly the best policy. *I always endeavoured to do my best.*”

*Mit.* Sémiramis à ses douleurs livrée,  
Sème ici les chagrins dont elle est dévorée :  
Elle tombe à genoux vers ces lieux retirés,  
A la nuit, au silence, à la mort consacrés ;  
Séjour où nul mortel n'osa jamais descendre,  
Où de Ninus, mon maître, on conserve la cendre.  
Elle approche à pas lents, l'air sombre, intimidé,  
Et se frappant le sein de ses pleurs inondé.  
A travers les horreurs d'un silence farouche,  
Les noms de fils, d'époux, échappent de sa bouche.

*Ar.* Et depuis quand les dieux l'accablent-ils  
ainsi ?

*Mit.* Du tems qu'elle ordonna que vous vinssiez  
ici,

*Ar.* Moi ?

*Mit.* Vous : ce fut, seigneur, au milieu de ces  
fêtes,

Quand Babylone en feu célébrait vos conquêtes ;  
Lorsqu'on vit déployer ces drapeaux suspendus,  
Monumens des états à vos armes rendus,  
Lorsqu'avec tant d'éclat l'Euphrate vit paraître  
Cette jeune Azéma, la nièce de mon maître,  
Ce pur sang de Bélus, et de nos souverains,  
Qu'aux Scythes ravisseurs ont arraché vos mains.



*Ar.* Azéma d'un malheur ne peut être la cause ;  
Mais de tout cependant Sémiramis dispose :  
Son cœur en ces horreurs n'est pas toujours plongé !

*Mit.* De ces chagrins mortels son esprit dégagé,  
Souvent reprend sa force et sa splendeur première.  
J'y revois tous les traits de cette ame si fière,  
A qui les plus grands rois sur la terre adorés,  
Même par les flatteurs, ne sont pas comparés ;  
Mais lorsque succombant au mal qui la déchire,  
Ses mains laissent flotter les rênes de l'empire,  
Alors le fier Assur, ce satrape insolent,  
Fait gémir le palais sous son joug accablant.

*Ar.* Accusant le destin qui m'a ravi mon père ;  
En proie aux passions d'un âge téméraire,  
A mes vœux orgueilleux sans guide abandonné,  
De quels écueils nouveaux je marche environné !  
Mon père en expirant me dit que ma fortune  
Dépendait en ces lieux de la cause commune.  
Il remit dans mes mains ces gages précieux,  
Qu'il conserva toujours loin des profanes yeux ;  
Je dois les déposer dans les mains du grand-prêtre ;  
Lui seul doit en juger, lui seul doit les connaître.

*Mit.* Sans vaine ambition, sans crainte, sans détour,

On le voit dans son temple, et jamais à la cour.  
Il n'a point affecté l'orgueil du rang suprême,  
Ni placé sa tiare auprès du diadème.  
Moins il veut être grand, plus il est révéré.  
Quelqu'accès m'est ouvert en ce séjour sacré ;  
Je puis même en secret lui parler à cette heure.  
Vous le verrez ici, non loin de sa demeure,  
Avant qu'un jour plus grand vienne éclairer nos  
yeux.

*SCENE II.*

*Arzace seul.*

*Ar.* Eh ! quelle est donc sur moi la volonté des  
dieux ?  
Aux dieux des Chaldéens quel service ai-je à  
rendre !  
Mais quelle voix plaintive ici se fait entendre ?  
Séjour sombre et sacré——

[*On entend des gémissemens sortir du fond du  
tombeau, où l'on suppose qu'ils sont entendus.*

## SCENE III.

*Arzace, le grand Mage Oroès, suite de Mages,  
Mitrane.*

*Or.* Jeune et brave mortel,  
D'un Dieu qui conduit tout, le décret éternel  
Vous amène à mes yeux plus que l'ordre d'un père.  
De Phradate, à jamais, la mémoire m'est chère.  
Son fils me l'est encor plus vous ne croyez.  
Ces gages précieux, par son ordre envoyés,  
Où sont-ils ?

*Ar.* Les voici. [*Les esclaves donnent le coffre  
aux deux Mages, qui le posent sur un autel.*]

*Or.* [*ouvrant le coffre.*] Allez : et vous, Mitrane,  
De ce sacré mystère écarterez tout profane.

[*les Mages se retirent.*]

Voici ce même sceau, dont Ninus autrefois  
Transmit aux nations l'empreinte de ses loix ;  
Je la vois cette lettre à jamais effrayante,  
Que prête à se glacer traça sa main mourante.  
Adorez ce bandeau dont il fut couronné,

A venger son trépas ce fer est destiné,  
Ce fer qui subjuga la Perse et la Médie,  
Inutile instrument contre la perfidie,  
Contre un poison trop sûr, dont les mortels ap-  
prêts——

*Ar.* Ciel ! que m'apprenez-vous ?

*Or.* Ces horribles secrets  
Sont encor demeurés dans une nuit profonde.  
Du sein de ce sépulcre inaccessible au monde,  
Les mânes de Ninus, et les dieux outragés,  
Ont élevé leurs voix, et ne sont point vengés.

*Ar.* Jugez de quelle horreur j'ai dû sentir l'at-  
teinte.

Ici même, et du fond de cette auguste enceinte,  
D'affreux gémissemens sont vers moi parvenus.

*Or.* Ces accens de la mort sont la voix de  
Ninus.

*Ar.* Deux fois à mon oreille ils se sont fait en-  
tendre.

*Or.* Ils demandent vengeance.

*Ar.* Il a droit de l'attendre.

Je ne sais ; mais l'aspect de ce fatal tombeau,  
Dans mes sens étonnés porte un trouble nouveau.  
Ne puis-je consulter ce roi qu'on y révère ?

*Or.* Non, le ciel le défend : un oracle sévère  
Nous interdit l'accès de ce séjour de pleurs,  
Habité par la mort, et par des dieux vengeurs.  
Attendez avec moi le jour de la justice ;  
Il est tems qu'il arrive, et que tout s'accomplisse.  
J'ai dit ce que j'ai dû : tremblez qu'en ces rem-  
parts,

Une parole, un geste, un seul de vos regards,  
Ne trahisse un secret que mon dieu vous confie.  
Il y va de sa gloire et du sort de l'Asie,  
Il y va de vos jours. Vous, Mages, approchez :  
Que ces chers monumens sous l'autel soient cachés.

[*La grande porte du palais s'ouvre, et se rem-  
plit de gardes. Assur paroît avec sa suite  
d'un autre côté.*

Déjà le palais s'ouvre.

*Or.* \* Adieu. Quand la nuit sombre  
Sur ces coupables murs viendra jeter son ombre,  
Je pourrai vous parler en présence des dieux.  
Redoutez-les, Arzace : ils ont sur vous les yeux.

\* I have not scrupled to omit the passage where the first suspicion of Assur is raised in the breast of Arzace ; because no very sensible effect is wrought by it on the piece, though doubtless a progress was *supposed* here to be made in unfolding the plot.



SCENE IV.

*Arzace sur le devant du théâtre, avec Mitrane, qui reste auprès de lui; Assur vers un des côtés, avec Cédar, et sa suite.*

*Mit.* [*approchant d'Arzace.*] Des rois de Babylone Assur tient sa naissance;  
Sa fière autorité veut de la déférence.  
La reine le ménage, ou craint de l'offenser,  
Et l'on peut sans rougir devant lui s'abaisser.

*Ar.* Devant lui?

*Ass.* [*dans l'enfoncement, à Cédar.*] Me trompé-je? Arzace à Babylone?  
Sans mon ordre! qui! lui! tant d'audace m'étonne.

*Ar.* Quel orgueil!

*Ass.* Approchez. Quels intérêts nouveaux  
Vous font abandonner vos camps et vos drapeaux?  
Des rives de l'Oxus quel sujet vous amène?

*Ar.* Mes services, seigneur, et l'ordre de la reine.

*Ass.* Quoi! la reine vous mande?

*Ar.* Oui.

*Ass.* Mais savez-vous bien

E e

Que pour avoir son ordre on demande le mien ?

*Ar.* Je l'ignorais, seigneur, et j'aurais pensé même  
Blessé en le croyant l'honneur du diadème.

Pardonnez, un soldat est mauvais courtisan.

Nourri dans la Scythie, aux plaines d'Arbazan,

J'ai pu servir la cour, et non pas la connaître.

*Ass.* L'âge, le tems, les lieux vous l'apprendront  
peut-être.

Mais ici par moi seul aux pieds du trône admis,

Que venez-vous chercher près de Sémiramis ?

*Ar.* J'ose lui demander le prix de mon courage,  
L'honneur de la servir.

*Ass.* Vous osez davantage.

Vous ne m'expliquez pas vos vœux présomptueux ;

Je sais pour Azéma vos desseins et vos feux.

*Ar.* Je l'adore, sans doute ; et son cœur où  
j'aspire,

Est d'un prix à mes yeux au-dessus de l'empire :

Et mes profonds respects, mon amour——

*Ass.* Arrêtez.

Vous ne connaissez pas à qui vous insultez.

Qui ? vous, associer la race d'un Sarmate

Au sang des demi-dieux du Tigre et de l'Euphrate ?

Je veux bien par pitié vous donner un avis :  
Si vous osez porter jusqu'à Sémiramis  
L'injurieux aveu que vous osez me faire,  
Vous m'avez entendu, frémissiez, téméraire :  
Mes droits impunément ne sont pas offensés.

*Ar.* J'y cours de ce pas même, et vous m'enhardissez.

Je vous paroïs hardi, mon feu peut vous déplaire ;  
Mais vous me paraissez cent fois plus téméraire,  
Vous, qui sous votre joug prétendant m'accabler,  
Vous croyez assez grand pour m'avoir fait trembler.

*Ass.* Pour vous punir peut-être : et je vais vous apprendre,

Quel prix de tant d'audace un sujet doit attendre.

*Ar.* Tous deux nous l'apprendrons.

SCENE V.

*Sémiramis paroît dans le fond, appuyée sur ses femmes : Otane, son confident, va au-devant d'Assur. Assur, Arzace, Mitrane.*

*Ot.* Seigneur, quittez ces lieux ;  
La reine en ce moment se cache à tous les yeux.

Respectez les douleurs de son ame éperdue.

Dieux, retirez la main sur sa tête étendue ?

*Ar.* Que je la plains !

*Ass.* [à l'un des siens.] Sortons ; et sans plus  
consulter,

De ce trouble inoui songeons à profiter.

*Sem.* [avançant. Elle marche éperdue sur la scène,  
croyant voir l'ombre de Ninus.] Abymes,  
fermez-vous ; fantôme horrible, arrête !

Frappe, ou cesse à la fin de menacer ma tête.

Arzace est-il venu ?

*Ot.* Madame, en cette cour

Arzace auprès du temple a devancé le jour.

*Sem.* Cette voix formidable, infernale ou céleste,  
Qui dans l'ombre des nuits pousse un cri si  
funeste,

M'avertit que le jour qu'Arzace doit venir.

Mes douloureux tourmens seront prêt à finir.

*Ot.* Au sein de ces horreurs goûtez donc  
quelque joie ;

Espérez dans ces dieux, dont le bras se déploie.

*Sem.* Arzace est dans ma cour !—Ah ! je sens  
qu'à son nom

L'horreur de mon forfait trouble moins ma raison.

*Ot.* Ninus, en vous chassant de son lit et du trône,

En vous perdant, madame, eût perdu Babylone.

Pour le bien des mortels vous prévîntes ses coups ;

Assur fut en effet plus coupable que vous ;

Sa main qui prépara le breuvage homicide,

Ne tremble point pourtant, et rien ne l'intimide.

*Sem.* Nos destins, nos devoirs étaient trop différens ;

Plus les nœuds sont sacrés, plus les crimes sont grands.

J'étais épouse, Otane, et je suis sans excuse ;

Devant les dieux vengeurs mon désespoir m'accuse.

J'avais cru que ces dieux justement offensés,

En m'arrachant mon fils, m'avaient punie assez ;

Que tant d'heureux travaux rendaient mon diadème,

Ainsi qu'au monde entier, respectable au ciel même.

Mais depuis quelques mois, ce spectre furieux

Vient affliger mon cœur, mon oreille, mes yeux.

D'un grand avénement je me vois avertie,

Et peut-être il est tems que le crime s'expie.

*Ot.* Mais est-il assuré que ce spectre fatal  
Soit en effet sorti du séjour infernal !



Souvent de ses erreurs notre ame est obsédée;  
De son ouvrage même elle est intimidée,  
Croit voir ce qu'elle craint, et dans l'horreur des  
nuits

Voit enfin les objets qu'elle-même a produits.

*Sem.* Je l'ai vu; ce n'est point un erreur passagère,  
Qu'enfante du sommeil la vapeur mensongère;  
Le sommeil à mes yeux refusant ses douceurs,  
N'a point sur mes esprits répandu ses erreurs.  
Je frémis quand il faut ménager mon complice :  
Rougir devant ses yeux est mon premier supplice;  
Et je déteste en lui cet avantage affreux  
Que lui donne un forfait qui nous unit tous deux.  
Je voudrais—mais faut-il, dans l'état qui m'op-  
prime,

Par un crime nouveau punir sur lui mon crime?

Je demandais Arzace, afin de l'opposer

Au complice odieux qui pense m'imposer;

Je m'occupais d'Arzace, et j'étais moins troublée.

Dans ces momens de paix, qui m'avaient consolée,

Ce ministre de mort a reparu soudain,

Tout dégouttant de sang, et le glaive à la main :

Mon trône m'importune, et ma gloire passée

N'est qu'un nouveau tourment de ma triste pensée.

J'ai nourri mes chagrins, sans les manifester ;  
Ma peur m'a fait rougir. J'ai craint de consulter  
Ce mage révééré, que chérit Babylone,  
D'avilir devant lui la majesté du trône,  
De montrer une fois, en présence du ciel,  
Sémiramis tremblante aux regards d'un mortel.  
De Memphis aujourd'hui j'attends une réponse.

SCENE VI.

*Sémiramis, Otane, Mitrane.*

*Mit.* Aux portes du palais, en secret on annonce  
Un prêtre de l'Egypte arrivé de Memphis.

*Sem.* Je verrai donc mes maux ou comblés ou  
finis.

Allons, cachons sur-tout au reste de l'empire,  
Le trouble humiliant dont l'horreur me déchire ;  
Et qu'Arzace à l'instant à mon ordre rendu,  
Puisse apporter le calme à ce cœur éperdu.

## ACTE II. SCENE I.

*Arzace, Azéma.*

*Az.* \*Je ne serai qu'à vous ; mais notre amour nous perd.

Votre cœur généreux, trop simple et trop ouvert,  
A cru qu'en cette cour, ainsi qu'en votre armée,  
Suivi de vos exploits, et de la renommée,  
Vous pouviez déployer, sincère impunément,  
La fierté d'un héros, et le cœur d'un amant.  
Vous outragez Assur, vous devez le connaître ;  
Vous ne pouvez le perdre ; il menace, il est maître ;  
Il abuse en ces lieux de son pouvoir fatal ;  
Il est inexorable—il est votre rival.

*Ar.* Il vous aime ! qui ? lui ?

*Az.* Ce cœur sombre et farouche,  
Qui hait toute vertu, qu'aucun charme ne touche ?  
Il pense en m'immolant à ses secrets desseins,

\* What precedes in this act conveys exactly the same information as the first scene in the play ; and as whatever does not increase, diminishes dramatic interest, it is well left out.

Appuyer de mes droits ses droits trop incertains.  
Pour moi si Ninias, à qui, dès sa naissance,  
Ninus m'avait donnée aux jours de mon enfance ;  
Si l'héritier du sceptre à moi seule promis  
Voyait encor le jour près de Sémiramis ;  
S'il me donnait son cœur, avec le rang suprême,  
J'en atteste l'amour, j'en jure par vous-même,  
Ninias me verrait préférer aujourd'hui  
Un exil avec vous, à ce trône avec lui.  
Peut-être l'ennemi ne borne point sa rage.  
Il vous craint, il vous hait.

*Ar.* Je le hais davantage,  
Mais je ne le crains pas, étant aimé de vous.  
Conservez vos bontés, je brave son courroux.  
La reine entre nous deux tient au moins la balance.  
Je me suis vu d'abord admis en sa présence :  
Elle m'a fait sentir à ce premier accueil,  
Autant d'humanité qu'Assur avoit d'orgueil.

*Az.* Si la reine est pour nous, Assur en vain  
menace ;  
Je ne crains rien.

*Ar.* J'allais, plein d'une noble audace,  
Mettre à ses pieds mes vœux jusqu'à vous élevés,  
Qui révoltent Assur, et que vous approuvez.

Un prêtre de l'Égypte approche au moment même,  
Des oracles d'Ammon portant l'ordre suprême.  
Elle ouvre le billet d'une tremblante main,  
Fixe les yeux sur moi, les détourne soudain,  
Laisse couler des pleurs ; interdite, éperdue,  
Me regarde, soupire, et s'échappe à ma vue.

*Az.* Sémiramis troublée a semblé quelques jours,  
Des soins de son empire abandonner le cours :  
Et j'ai tremblé qu'Assur, en ces jours de tristesse,  
Du palais effrayé n'accablât la faiblesse.  
Mais la reine a paru : tout s'est calmé soudain,  
Tout a senti le poids du pouvoir souverain.  
Si déjà de la cour mes yeux ont quelque usage,  
La reine hait Assur, l'observe, le ménage :  
Son cœur paraissait plein d'un long ressentiment,  
Mais souvent à la cour tout change en un moment.  
Retournez et parlez.

*Ar.* J'obéis ; mais j'ignore  
Si je puis à son trône être introduit encore.

*Az.* Ma voix secondera mes vœux et votre espoir :  
Je fais de vous aimer ma gloire et mon devoir.  
Allez. Assur paraît.

*Ar.* Qui ? ce traître ? A sa vue,  
D'une invincible horreur je sens mon ame émue.



SCENE II.

*Assur, Cédar, Arzace, Azéma.*

*Ass.* [*à Cédar.*] Vas, dis-je, et vois enfin si les  
tems sont venus

De lui porter des coups trop long-tems retenus.

[*Cédar sort.*

Quoi, je le vois encor ! il brave encor ma haine !

*Ar.* Vous voyez un sujet protégé par sa reine.

*Ass.* Sachez que de Ninus le droit m'est assuré,  
Qu'entre son trône et moi je ne vois qu'un degré,  
Que la reine m'écoute, et souvent sacrifie  
A mes justes conseils un sujet qui s'oublie ;  
Et que tous vos respects ne pourront effacer  
Les téméraires vœux que m'osaient offenser.

*Ar.* Vos aïeux, dont Bélus a fondé la noblesse,  
Sont votre premier droit au cœur de la princesse :  
Vos intérêts presens, le soin de l'avenir,  
Le besoin de l'état, tout semble vous unir.  
Moi, contre tant de droits qu'il me faut reconnaître,  
J'ose en opposer un qui les vaut tous peut-être ;

J'aime: et j'ajouterais, seigneur, que mon secours  
 A vengé ses malheurs, a défendu ses jours,  
 L'état peut quelque jour être en votre puissance:  
 (Le ciel donne souvent des rois dans sa vengeance.)  
 Mais il vous trompe au moins dans l'un de vos  
 projets,

Si vous comptez Arzace au rang de vos sujets.

*Ar.* Tu combles la mesure, et tu cours à ta perte.

### SCENE III.

*Assur, Azéma.*

*Ass.* Madame, son audace est trop long-tems soufferte.

Mais puis-je en liberté m'expliquer avec vous,  
 Sur un sujet plus noble et plus digne de nous ?

*Az.* En est-il ? mais parlez.

*Ass.* Bientôt l'Asie entière

Sous vos pas et les miens ouvre une autre carrière :  
 Les faibles intérêts doivent peu nous frapper ;  
 L'univers nous appelle, et va nous occuper.  
 Sémiramis n'est plus que l'ombre d'elle-même ;

Le ciel semble abaisser cette grandeur suprême :  
Cet astre si brillant, si long-tems respecté,  
Penche vers son déclin, sans force et sans clarté.  
On le voit, on murmure, et déjà Babylone  
Demande à haute voix un héritier du trône.  
Ce mot en dit assez ; vous connaissez mes droits.  
Ce n'est point à l'amour à nous donner des rois :  
Non qu'à tant de beautés mon ame inaccessible,  
Se fasse une vertu de paraître insensible.  
L'amour à vos genoux ne doit se présenter,  
Que pour vous rendre un sceptre, et non pour vous  
l'ôter ;  
C'est ma main qui vous l'offre ; et du moins je me  
flatte  
Que vous n'immolez pas à l'amour d'un Sarmate,  
La majesté d'un nom qu'il vous faut respecter,  
Et le trône du monde où vous devez monter.

*Az.* Je connais nos aïeux ; mais après tout j'ignore

Si, parmi ces héros que l'Assyrie adore,  
Il en est un plus grand, plus cheri des humains,  
Que ce même Sarmate objet de vos dédains.  
J'écoute peu ces bruits que le peuple répète,  
Echos tumultueux d'une voix plus secrète.

J'ignore si vos chefs, aux révoltes poussés,  
De servir une femme en secret sont lassés.  
Si le ciel a parlé, seigneur, qu'il vous choisisse,  
Pour annoncer son ordre, et servir sa justice.  
Elle règne en un mot. Et vous qui gouvernez,  
Vous prenez à ses pieds les loix que vous donnez ;  
Je ne connais ici que son pouvoir suprême ;  
Ma gloire est d'obéir ; obéissez de même.

## SCENE IV.

*Assur, Cédar.*

*Ass.* Obeir ! ah ! ce mot fait trop rougir mon  
front ;

J'en ai trop dévoré l'insupportable affront.  
Parle, as-tu réussi ? Ces semences de haine,  
Que nos soins en secret cultivaient avec peine,  
Pourront-elles porter, au gré de ma fureur,  
Les fruits que j'en attends de discorde et d'horreur ?

*Ced.* On veut un successeur au trône d'Assyrie,  
Et quiconque, seigneur, aime encor la patrie,  
Ou qui gagné par moi se vante de l'aimer,

Dit qu'il nous faut un maître, et qu'il vous faut nommer.

*Ass.* Chagrins toujours cuisans ! honte toujours nouvelle !

Quoi ! ma gloire, mon rang, mon destin dépend d'elle !

Quoi ! j'aurai fait mourir et Ninus et son fils,

Pour ramper le premier devant Sémiramis,

Ninias en secret privé de la lumière,

Du trône où j'aspirais m'entr'ouvrait la barrière,

Quand sa puissante main la ferma sous mes pas.

C'est en vain que flattant l'orgueil de ses appas,

J'avais cru chaque jour prendre sur sa jeunesse

Cet heureux ascendant, que les soins, la souplesse,

L'attention, le tems, savent si bien donner

Sur un cœur sans dessein, facile à gouverner.

Je connus mal cette ame inflexible et profonde ;

Rien ne la put toucher que l'empire du monde.

Elle en parut trop digne, il le faut avouer :

Je suis dans mes fureurs contraint à la louer.

\* Que dis-je ? sa beauté, ce flatteur avantage,

\* The greatness of Semiramis need not be described in such numerous couplets. Action and pathos being the principles of tragedy, the language of action and pathos is alone proper for it. However, every *species of eloquence* is its right,



Fit adorer les loix qu'imposa son courage ;  
Et quand dans mon dépit j'ai voulu conspirer,  
Mes amis consternés n'ont su que l'admirer.

*Ced.* Ce charme se dissipe, et ce pouvoir chancelle.  
Son génie égaré semble s'éloigner d'elle.

*Ass.* De Babylone, au moins, j'ai fait parler la  
voix.

Sémiramis enfin va céder une fois.  
Ce premier coup porté, sa ruine est certaine.  
Me donner Azéma, c'est cesser d'être reine ;  
Oser me refuser, soulève ses états ;  
Et de tous les côtés le piège est sous ses pas.

*Ced.* De vous et d'Azéma l'union désirée,  
Rejoindra de nos rois la tige séparée,  
Tout vous porte à l'empire, et tout parle pour vous.

*Ass.* Pour Azéma, sans doute, il n'est point d'autre  
époux.

Mais pourquoi de si loin faire venir Arzace ?  
Elle a favorisé son insolente audace.  
Tout prêt à la punir, je me vois retenu  
Par cette même main dont il est soutenu.

[Il veut sortir.]

provided it is their language, and not the language of declamation.

SCENE V.

*Assur, Otane, Cédar.*

*Ot.* Seigneur, Sémiramis vous ordonne d'attendre ;  
Elle veut en secret vous voir et vous entendre,  
Et de cet entretien qu'aucun ne soit témoin.

*Ass.* A ses ordres sacrés j'obéis avec soin,  
Otane, et j'attendrai sa volonté suprême.

SCENE VI.

*Assur, Cédar.*

*Ass.* Eh! d'où peut donc venir ce changement  
extrême?

Depuis près de trois mois je lui semble odieux ;  
Mon aspect importun lui fait baisser les yeux :  
Toujours quelque témoin nous voit et nous écoute ;  
De nos froids entretiens, qui lui pèsent sans doute,  
Ses soudaines frayeurs interrompent le cours ;

Son silence souvent répond à mes discours.

Que veut-elle me dire ? ou que veut elle apprendre ?

Elle avance vers nous : c'est elle. Va m'attendre.

### SCENE VII.

*Sémiramis, Assur.*

*Sem.* Seigneur, il faut enfin que je vous ouvre un  
cœur,

Qui long-tems devant vous dévora sa douleur.

J'ai gouverné l'Asie, et peut-être avec gloire ;

Peut-être Babylone, honorant ma mémoire,

Mettra Sémiramis à côté des grands rois.

Vos mains de mon empire ont soutenu le poids.

Des dieux, dans mon bonheur, j'oubliai la justice ;

Elle parle, je cède ; et ce grand édifice,

Que je crus à l'abri des outrages du temps,

Veut être raffermi jusqu'en ses fondemens.

*Ass.* Madame, c'est à vous d'achever votre ouvrage,  
De commander au tems, de prévoir son outrage,

Qui pourrait obscurcir des jours si glorieux ?

Quand la terre obéit, que craignez-vous des dieux ?

*Sem.* La cendre de Ninus repose en cette enceinte,  
Et vous me demandez le sujet de ma crainte?

Vous!

*Ass.* Je vous avourai que je suis indigné,  
Qu'on se souvienne encor si Ninus a régné.  
Craint-on, après quinze ans, ses mânes en colère?  
Ils se seraient vengés, s'ils avaient pu le faire.  
D'un éternel oubli ne tirez point les morts :  
Je suis épouvanté, mais c'est de vos remords.  
Mais si quelque intérêt, plus noble et plus solide,  
Eclaire votre esprit, qu'un vain trouble intimide,  
S'il vous faut de Bélus éterniser le sang,  
Si la jeune Azéma prétend à ce haut rang—

*Sem.* Je viens vous en parler. Ammon et Baby-  
lone

Demandent sans détour un héritier du trône.

Le ciel me parle enfin, j'obéis à sa voix ;

Ecoutez son oracle, et recevez mes loix.

*Babylone doit prendre une face nouvelle,*

*Quand d'un second hymen allumant le flambeau,*

*Mère trop malheureuse, épouse trop cruelle,*

*Tu calmeras Ninus au fond de son tombeau.*

De vous et d'Azéma mon successeur peut naître ;

Vous briguez cet hymen, elle y prétend peut-être.

Mais moi, je ne veux pas que vos droits et les siens,  
Ensemble confondus, s'arment contre les miens :

Si je peux soutenir la majesté du trône.

Je vais donner, seigneur, un maître à Babylone.

Mais soit qu'un si grand choix honore un autre ou  
vous,

Je serai souveraine, en prenant un époux.

Assemblez seulement les princes et les mages ;

Qu'ils viennent à ma voix joindre ici leurs suffrages ;

Le don de mon empire, et de ma liberté,

Est l'acte le plus grand de mon autorité.

Loin de le prévenir, qu'on l'attende en silence.

Le ciel à ce grand jour attache sa clémence.

### SCENE VIII.

*Assur seul.*

*Ass.* Prétend-elle en cédant raffermir ses destins ?

Et s'unit-elle à moi pour tromper mes desseins ?

A l'hymen d'Azéma je ne dois rien prétendre !

C'est m'assurer de sien, que je dois seul attendre.

Quel pouvoir inconnu gouverne les humains !



Que de faibles ressorts font d'illustres destins !  
Doutons encor de tout ; voyons encor la reine.  
Sa résolution me paraît trop soudaine ;  
Trop de soins à mes yeux paraissent l'occuper,  
Et qui change aisément, est faible, ou veut tromper.

## ACTE III. SCENE I.

*Sémiramis, Otane.**Le théâtre représente un cabinet du palais.*

*Sem.* Otane, qui l'eût cru, que les dieux en colère

Me tendaient en effet une main salutaire ?

Ils veulent mon hymen ; ils veulent expier,  
Par ce lien nouveau, les crimes du premier.

Non, je ne doute plus que des cœurs ils disposent ;  
Le mien vole au-devant de la loi qu'ils m'imposent.

Arzace, c'en est fait, je me rends, et je voi

Que tu devais régner sur le monde et sur moi.\*

\* There are ideas brought together in this instance with bad effect, resembling the *tigers and lambs* of Horace. As there is a want of nature in this sentiment, so there is a want of delicacy in the *unfaithful fidelity* of Amelia to Moor, in the Robbers ; at least, allowing it to be new, I cannot, however, admire it.

*Ot.* C'est beaucoup abaisser ce superbe courage,  
Qui des maîtres du Gange a dédaigné l'hommage,  
Qui n'écoutant jamais de faibles sentimens,  
Veut des rois pour sujets, et non pas pour amants.  
Quoi ! de l'amour enfin connaissez-vous les charmes ?  
Et pouvez-vous passer de ces sombres alarmes,  
Au tendre sentiment qui vous parle aujourd'hui ?

*Sem.* Non, ce n'est point l'amour qui m'en-  
traîne vers lui.

Mes malheureuses mains à peine cultivèrent  
Ce fruit d'un triste hymen que les dieux m'en-  
levèrent.

Seule, en proie aux chagrins qui venaient m'alarmer,  
N'ayant autour de moi rien que je puisse aimer,  
Sentant ce vuide affreux de ma grandeur suprême,  
M'arrachant à ma cour, et m'évitant moi-même,  
J'ai cherché le repos dans ces grands monumens,  
D'une ame qui se fuit trompeurs amusemens.

Le repos m'échappait, je sens que je le trouve :  
Je m'étonne en secret du charme que j'éprouve.  
Arzace me tient lieu d'un époux et d'un fils,  
Et de tous mes travaux, et du monde soumis.

*Ot.* Mais vous avez prévu la douleur et la rage,  
Dont va frémir Assur à ce nouvel outrage :

Car enfin il se flatte, et la commune voix  
A fait tomber sur lui l'honneur de votre choix.

*Sem.* Que pourront désormais sa brigue et son  
audace ;

Contre Sémiramis unie avec Arzace ?

Oui, je crois que Ninus content de mes remords,  
Pour presser cet hymen quitte le sein des morts.  
Sa grande ombre, en effet, déjà trop offensée,  
Contre Sémiramis serait trop courroucée ;  
Elle verrait donner, avec trop de douleur,  
Sa couronne et son lit à son empoisonneur.  
Du sein de son tombeau voilà ce qui l'appelle,  
Les oracles d'Ammon s'accordent avec elle ;  
La vertu d'Oroès ne me fait plus trembler :  
Pour entendre mes loix je l'ai fait appeller ;  
Je l'attends.

*Ot.* Son crédit, son sacré caractère,  
Peut appuyer le choix que vous prétendez faire.

*Sem.* Sa voix achevera de rassurer mon cœur.

*Ot.* Il vient.

SCENE II.

*Sémiramis, Oroès.*

*Sem.* De Zoroastre auguste successeur,  
Je vais nommer un roi ; vous couronnez sa tête :  
Tout est-il préparé pour cette auguste fête ?

*Or.* Les mages et les grands attendent votre choix ;  
Je remplis mon devoir, et j'obéis aux rois :  
Le soin de les juger n'est point notre partage ;  
C'est celui des dieux seuls.

*Sem.* A ce sombre langage,  
On dirait qu'en secret vous condamnez mes vœux.

*Or.* Je ne les connais pas ; puissent-ils être heureux !

*Sem.* Mais vous interprêtez les volontés célestes.  
Ces signes que j'ai vus me seraient-ils funestes ?  
Une ombre, un dieu peut-être, à mes yeux s'est  
montré ;

Dans le sein de la terre il est soudain rentré.  
Quel pouvoir a brisé l'éternelle barrière,  
Dont le ciel sépara l'enfer et la lumière ?  
D'où vient que les humains, malgré l'arrêt du sort,



Reviennent à mes yeux du séjour de la mort ?

*Or.* Du ciel, quand il le faut, la justice suprême  
Suspend l'ordre éternel, établi par lui-même :

Il permet à la mort d'interrompre ses loix,  
Pour l'effroi de la terre, et l'exemple des rois.

*Sem.* Les oracles d'Ammon veulent un sacrifice.

*Or.* Il se fera, madame.

*Sem.* Éternelle justice,

Qui lisez dans mon âme avec des yeux vengeurs,  
Ne la remplissez plus de nouvelles horreurs ;  
De mon premier hymen oubliez l'infortune.

[à Oroès, qui s'éloignait.

Revenez.

*Or.* [*revenant.*] Je croyois ma présence importune.

*Sem.* Répondez : ce matin aux pieds de vos autels  
Arzace a présenté des dons aux immortels ?

*Or.* Oui, ces dons leurs sont chers ; Arzace a su  
leur plaire.

*Sem.* Je le crois, et ce mot me rassure et m'éclaire.  
L'espérance et la paix reviennent me calmer.  
Allez, qu'un pur encens recommence à fumer.  
De vos mages, de vous, que la présence auguste  
Sur l'hymen le plus grand, sur le choix le plus juste,

Attirent de nos dieux les regards souverains.  
Puissent de cet état les éternels destins  
Reprendre avec les miens une splendeur nouvelle !  
Hâtez de ce beau jour la pompe solennelle.  
Allez.

SCENE III.

*Sémiramis, Otane.*

*Sem.* Ainsi le ciel est d'accord avec moi :  
Je suis son interprète, en choisissant un roi.  
Que je vais l'étonner par le don d'un empire !  
Qu'il est loin d'espérer ce moment où j'aspire !  
Enfin ma gloire est pure, et je puis la goûter.

SCENE IV.

*Sémiramis, Otane, Mitrane, un Officier du palais.*

*Ot.* Arzace à vos genoux demande à se jeter ;  
Daignez à ses douleurs accorder cette grace.

*Sem.* \* Quel chagrin près de moi peut occuper  
Arzace ?

Dieux des Assyriens, de Ninus, de mon fils,  
Pour le favoriser soyez tous réunis !

SCENE V.

*Sémiramis, Arzace, Azéma.*

*Ar.* O reine, à vous servir ma vie est consacrée ;  
Mon père avait joui de quelque renommée ;  
Mes yeux l'ont vu mourir, commandant votre armée ;  
Il a laissé, madame, à son malheureux fils,  
Des exemples frappans, peut-être mal suivis.  
Je n'ose devant vous rappeler la mémoire  
Des services d'un père et de sa faible gloire,  
Qu'afin d'obtenir grace à vos sacrés genoux,  
Pour un fils téméraire, et coupable envers vous,

\* I have judged it unnecessary to preserve the " qu'il vienne," thinking that, though the story will never suffer by being intelligibly made out, there is less ease in such verbal precision. It may be imagined only necessary to announce Arzace.

Qui de ses vœux hardis écoutant l'imprudence,  
Craint même en vous servant de vous faire une offense.\*

*Sem.* Vous, m'offenser? qui, vous? ah! ne le craignez pas.

*Ar.* Vous donnez votre main, vous donnez vos états.

Sur ces grand intérêts, sur ce choix que vous faites,  
Mon cœur doit renfermer ses plaintes indiscrètes.  
Le peuple nomme Assur, il est de votre sang :  
Puisse-t-il mériter et son nom et son rang !  
Mais enfin je me sens l'ame trop élevée  
Pour adorer ici la main que j'ai bravée,  
Pour me voir écrasé de son orgueil jaloux.  
Souffrez que loin de lui, malgré moi loin de vous,  
Je retourne aux climats où je vous ai servie,  
J'y suis assez puissant contre sa tyrannie,  
Si des bienfaits nouveaux dont j'ose me flatter——

\* In this scene, which is a sort of audience before a levee, perhaps Shakspeare might have delighted in describing, the *partes in bellum missi ducis*, the general's character; and he would have shown how the colouring of tragic manners might give force to the action, instead of taking from its effect.

*Sem.* Ah ! que m'avez-vous dit ? vous, fuir ? vous, me quitter ?

Vous pourriez craindre Assur ?

*Ar.* Non. Ce cœur téméraire

Craint dans le monde entier votre seule colère.

Peut-être avez-vous su mes désirs orgueilleux :

Votre indignation peut confondre mes vœux.

Je tremble.

*Sem.* Espérez tout ; je vous ferai connaître

Qu'Assur en aucun tems ne sera votre maître.

*Ar.* Et bien je l'avoûrai ; mes yeux avec horreur,

De votre époux en lui verraient le successeur.

Mais s'il ne peut prétendre à ce grand hyménée,

Verra-t-on à ses loix Azéma destinée ?

Pardonnez à l'excès de ma présomption ;

Ne redoutez vous point sa sourde ambition ?

Jadis à Ninias Azéma fut unie :

C'est dans le même sang qu'Assur puisa la vie ;

Je ne suis qu'un sujet, mais j'ose contre lui——

*Sem.* Des sujets tels que vous sont mon plus noble appui.

Je sais vos sentiments : votre ame peu commune

Chérit Sémiramis, et non pas ma fortune.

Sur mes vrais intérêts vos yeux sont éclairés :



Je vous en fais l'arbitre, et vous les soutiendrez.

D'Assur et d'Azéma je romps l'intelligence ;

J'ai prévu les dangers d'une telle alliance :

Je sais tous ses projets, ils seront confondus.

*Ar.* Ah ! puisqu'ainsi mes vœux sont par vous entendus,

Puisque vous avez lu dans le fond de mon ame——

*Az.* [*arrive avec précipitation.*] Reine, j'ose à vos pieds——

*Sem.* [*relevant Azéma.*] Rassurez-vous, madame :  
Quel que soit mon époux, je vous garde en ces lieux  
Un sort et des honneurs dignes de vos aïeux.

Destinée à mon fils, vous m'êtes toujours chère ;

Et je vous vois encore avec des yeux de mère.

Placez-vous l'un et l'autre avec ceux que ma voix

A nommés pour témoins de mon auguste choix.

Que l'appui de l'état se range auprès du trône.

[*à Arzace.*

## SCENE VI.

*Le cabinet où était Sémiramis fait place à un grand salon magnifiquement orné. Plusieurs Officiers, avec les marques de leurs dignités, sont sur des gradins. Un trône est placé au milieu du salon. Des Satrapes sont auprès du trône. Le Grand-Prêtre entre avec les Mages. Il se place debout entre Assur et Arzace. La Reine est au milieu avec Azéma et ses femmes. Des gardes occupent le fond du salon.*

*Or. Princes, mages, guerriers, soutiens de Baby-lone,*

Par l'ordre de la reine en ces lieux rassemblés,  
Les décrets de nos dieux vous seront révélés :  
Ils veillent sur l'empire, et voici la journée  
Qu'à de grands changemens ils avoient destinée.  
Quel que soit la monarque, et quel que soit l'époux  
Que la reine ait choisi pour l'élever sur nous,  
C'est à nous d'obéir—— J'apporte au nom des mages  
Ce que je dois aux rois, des vœux et des hommages.

*Az.* Pontife, et vous, seigneur, on va nommer un roi.

Ce grand choix, tel qu'il soit, peut n'offenser que moi.  
Mais je naquis sujette, et je le suis encore ;  
Je m'abandonne aux soins dont la reine m'honore ;  
Et sans oser prévoir un sinistre avenir,  
Je donne à ses sujets l'exemple d'obéir.

*Ass.* Quoi qu'il puisse arriver, quoi que le ciel décide,

Que le bien de l'état à ce grand jour préside !  
Jurons tous par ce trône, et par Sémiramis,  
D'être à ce choix auguste aveuglément soumis,  
D'obéir sans murmure au gré de sa justice.

*Ar.* Je le jure ; et ce bras armé pour son service,  
Ce cœur à qui sa voix commande après les dieux,  
Ce sang dans les combats répandu sous ses yeux,  
Sont à mon nouveau maître, avec le même zèle  
Qui sans se démentir les anima pour elle.

*Or.* De la reine et des dieux j'attends les volontés.

*Sem.* Il suffit ; prenez place, et vous, peuple,  
écoutez. [*elle s'assied sur le trône. Azéma,  
Assur, le Grand-Prêtre, Arzace, prennent  
leurs places : elle continue.*]

Si la terre, quinze ans de ma gloire occupée,  
 Révéra dans ma main le sceptre avec l'épée,  
 Dans cette même main qu'un usage jaloux  
 Destinait au fuseau sous les loix d'un époux ;  
 Si j'ai, de mes sujets, surpassant l'espérance,  
 De cet empire heureux porté le poids immense,  
 Je vais le partager, pour le mieux maintenir,  
 Pour étendre sa gloire aux siècles à venir.  
 Il vous faut un héros digne d'un tel empire,  
 Digne de tels sujets, et, si j'ose le dire,  
 Digne de cette main qui va le couronner,  
 Et du cœur indomté que je vais lui donner.  
 J'ai consulté les loix, les maîtres du tonnerre,  
 L'intérêt de l'état, l'intérêt de la terre ;  
 Je fais le bien du monde en nommant mon époux.  
 Adorez le héros qui va régner sur vous ;  
 Voyez revivre en lui les princes de ma race.  
 Ce héros, cet époux, ce monarque est Arzace.

*[elle descend du trône, et tout le monde se lève.]*

*Az.* Arzace ! ô perfidie !

*Ass.* O vengeance ! ô fureurs !

*Ar.* [*à Azéma.*] Ah ! croyez——

*Or.* Juste ciel ! écarter ces horreurs !

*Sem.* [avançant sur la scène, et s'adressant aux Mages.] Vous qui sanctifiez de si pures tendresses,

Venez sur les autels garantir nos promesses ;

Ninus et Ninias vous sont rendus en lui.

[le tonnerre gronde, et le tombeau paraît s'ébranler.

Ciel ! qu'est-ce que j'entends ?

*Or.* Dieux ! soyez notre appui.

*Sem.* Le Ciel tonne sur nous : est-ce faveur ou haine ?

Grace, dieux tout-puissants ! qu'Arzace me l'obtienne.

Quels funèbres accents redoublent mes terreurs !

La tombe s'est ouverte ; il paraît—Ciel !—je meurs—

[l'Ombre de Ninus sort de son tombeau.

*Ass.* L'ombre de Ninus même ! ô dieux ! est-il possible ?

*Ar.* Eh bien ! qu'ordonne-tu ? parle-nous, dieu terrible.

*Ass.* Parle.

*Sem.* Veux-tu me perdre, ou veux-tu pardonner ?  
C'est ton sceptre et ton lit que je viens de donner :



Juge si ce héros est digne de ta place—

Prononce, j'y consens.

*L'Om.* [*à Arzace.*] Tu régneras, Arzace,

Mais il est des forfaits que tu dois expier.

Dans ma tombe, à ma cendre, il faut sacrifier.

Sers et mon fils et moi ; souviens-toi de ton père :

Ecoute le pontife.

*Ar.* Ombre que je révère,

Demi-dieu dont l'esprit anime ces climats :

Ton aspect m'encourage, et ne m'étonne pas.

Oui, j'irai dans ta tombe au péril de ma vie.

Achève, que veux-tu que ma main sacrifie?

*[l'Ombre retourne de son estrade à la porte  
du tombeau.]*

Il s'éloigne, il nous fuit.

*Sem.* Ombre de mon époux,

Permetts qu'en ce tombeau j'embrasse tes genoux,

Que mes regrets——

*L'Om.* [*à la porte du tombeau.*] Arrête, et respecte  
ma cendre ;

Quand il en sera temps, je t'y ferai descendre.

*[le spectre rentre, et le mausolée se referme.]*

*Ass.* Quel horrible prodige!

*Sem.* O peuples! suivez moi,  
Venez tous dans ce temple, calmez votre effroi.  
Les mânes de Ninus ne sont point implacables :  
S'ils protègent Arzace, ils me sont favorables :  
C'est le ciel qui m'inspire, et qui vous donne un roi.  
Venez tous l'implorer pour Arzace et pour moi.\*

\* I think we experience some transitory emotion at the appearance of the spectre of Ninus, and his last words are mysteriously emphatic enough ; but on the whole this *sociable* ghost-scene seems amply to merit the censures of Lessing, which have been made known lately to the English reader, and which prefer to it the lonely midnight ghost-scene in Hamlet. In that, every word increases or keeps up alarm.

*ACTE IV. SCENE I.*

*Le théâtre représente le vestibule du temple.*

*Arzace, Azéma.*

*Ar.* N'irritez point mes maux ; ils m'accablent assez.

Cet oracle est affreux, plus que vous ne pensez.

Des prodiges sans nombre étonnent la nature.

Le ciel m'a tout ravi ; je vous perds.

*Az.* Ah ! parjure !

Vas, cesse d'ajouter aux horreurs de ce jour

L'indigne souvenir de ton perfide amour.

Je ne combattrai point la main qui te couronne,

Les morts qui t'ont parlé, ton cœur qui m'abandonne.

Des prodiges nouveaux qui me glacent d'effroi,

Ta barbare inconstance est plus grande pour moi.

Acheve, rend Ninus à ton crime propice :

Commence ici par moi ton affreux sacrifice :

Frappe, ingrat.

*Ar.* C'en est trop : mon cœur désespéré  
Contre ces derniers traits n'était point préparé.  
Vous voyez trop, cruelle, à ma douleur profonde,  
Si ce cœur vous préfère à l'empire du monde.  
Sémiramis m'est chère ; oui, je dois l'avouer :  
Votre bouche avec moi conspire à la louer.  
Apprenez tout mon sort ; ce fils de Ninus même,  
Cet unique héritier de la grandeur suprême—

*Az.* Eh bien !

*Ar.* Ce Ninias, qui presque en son berceau,  
De l'hymen avec vous alluma le flambeau,  
Qui naquit à la fois mon rival et mon maître—

*Az.* Ninias !

*Ar.* Il respire, il vient, il va paraître.

*Az.* Ninias, juste ciel ! Et quoi ! Sémiramis—

*Ar.* Jusqu'à ce jour trompée elle a pleuré son fils.

*Az.* Ninias est vivant !

*Ar.* C'est un secret encore,  
Renfermé dans le temple, et que la reine ignore.

*Az.* Mais Ninus te couronne, et sa veuve est à  
toi.

*Ar.* Mais son fils est à vous : mais son fils est  
mon roi ;

*Az.* Ninias est vivant ! eh bien ! qu'il reparaisse ;

Que sa mère à mes yeux attestant sa promesse,  
Que son père avec lui rappelé du tombeau,  
Rejoignent ces liens formés dans mon berceau ;  
Que Ninias mon roi, ton rival et ton maître,  
Ait pour moi tout l'amour que tu me dois peut-être ;  
Qu'il revienne, en un mot : lui, ni Sémiramis,  
Ni ces mânes sacrés que l'enfer a vomis,  
Ni le renversement de toute la nature,  
Ne pourront de mon ame arracher un parjure.  
Cruel, si tu trahis un si sacré lien,  
Je ne connais ici de crime que le tien.  
Je vois de tes destins le fatal interprète,  
Pour te dicter leurs loix sortir de sa retraite ;  
Le malheureux amour, dont tu trahis la foi,  
N'est point fait pour paraître entre les dieux et toi.  
Vas recevoir l'arrêt dont Ninus nous menace ;  
Ton sort dépend des dieux, le mien dépend d'Arzace.

[*elle sort.*

*Ar.* Arzace est à vous seule. Ah ! cruelle, arrêtez.  
Quel mélange d'horreurs et de félicités !



SCENE II.

*Arzace, Oroès, suivi des Mages.*

*Or.* [*aux Mages.*] Apportez ce bandeau d'un roi  
que je révère,  
Prenez ce fer sacré, cette lettre.

[*les Mages vont chercher ce que le Grand-  
Prêtre demande.*

*Ar.* O mon père !

Tirez moi de l'abyme où mes pas sont plongés ;  
Levez le voile affreux dont mes yeux sont chargés.

*Or.* Le voile va tomber, mon fils, et voici l'heure  
Où dans sa redoutable et profonde demeure,  
Ninus attend de vous, pour apaiser ses cris,  
L'offrande réservée à ses mânes trahis.

*Ar.* Quel ordre ? quelle offrande ? et qu'est-ce  
qu'il désire ?

Qui, moi ! venger Ninus, et Ninias respire ?

Qu'il vienne, il est mon roi, mon bras va le servir.

*Or.* Son père a commandé, ne sachez qu'obéir.

Dans une heure à sa tombe, Arzace, il faut vous rendre,

*[il donne le diadème et l'épée de Ninias.*

Armé du fer sacré que vos mains doivent prendre,

Ceint du même bandeau que son front a porté,

Et que vous-même ici vous m'avez présenté.

*Ar.* Du bandeau de Ninus !

*Or.* Ses mânes le commandent :

C'est dans cet appareil, c'est ainsi qu'ils attendent

Ce sang qui devant eux doit être offert par vous.

Ne songez qu'à frapper, qu'à servir leur courroux :

La victime y sera ; c'est assez vous instruire.

Reposez-vous sur eux du soin de la conduire.

*Ar.* S'il demande mon sang, disposez de ce bras.

Mais vous ne parlez point, seigneur, de Ninias ;

Vous ne me dites point comment son père même

Me donnerait sa femme avec son diadème ?

*Or.* Sa femme, vous ! la reine ! ô ciel ! Sémi-  
ramis !

Eh bien ! voici l'instant que je vous ai promis.

Connaissez vos destins, et cette femme impie.

*Ar.* Grands dieux !

*Or.* De son époux elle a tranché la vie.

*Ar.* Elle ! la reine !

*Or.* Assur, l'opprobre de son nom,  
Le détestable Assur a donné le poison.

*Ar.* [après un peu de silence.] Ce crime dans  
Assur n'a rien qui me surprenne ;  
Mais croirai-je en effet qu'une épouse, une reine,  
L'amour des nations, l'honneur des souverains,  
D'un attentat si noir ait pu souiller ses mains ?  
A-t-on tant de vertus, après un si grand crime ?

*Or.* Ce doute, cher Arzace, est d'un cœur magnanime.

Votre cœur, malgré vous, gémit épouvanté.  
Ne soyez plus surpris si Ninus irrité  
Est monté de la terre à ces voûtes impies ;  
Il vient briser des nœuds tissés par les furies ;  
Il vient montrer au jour des crimes impunis ;  
Des horreurs de l'inceste il vient sauver son fils.  
Il parle, il vous attend : Ninus est votre père ;  
Vous êtes Ninias, la reine est votre mère.

*Ar.* De tous ces coups mortels en un moment  
frappé,  
Dans la nuit du trépas je reste enveloppé :  
Moi, son fils ? moi ?

*Or.* Vous-même : en doutez-vous encore ?  
Apprenez que Ninus, à sa dernière aurore,

Sûr qu'un poison mortel en terminait le cours,  
 Et que le même crime attentait sur vos jours,  
 Qu'il attaquait en vous les sources de la vie,  
 Vous arracha mourant à cette cour impie.  
 Assur comblant sur vous ses crimes inouis,  
 Pour épouser la mère, empoisonna le fils.  
 Ces végétaux puissants qu'en Perse on voit éclore,  
 Bienfaits nés dans ses champs de l'astre qu'elle adore,  
 Par le soins de Phradate avec art préparés,  
 Firent sortir la mort de vos flancs déchirés :  
 De son fils qu'il perdit il vous donna la place ;  
 Vous ne fûtes connu que sous le nom d'Arzace.

*Ar.* Dieu, maître des destins, suis-je assez éprouvé ?  
 Vous me rendez la mort, dont vous m'avez sauvé.  
 Eh bien ! Sémiramis—oui, je reçus la vie  
 Dans le sein des grandeurs et de l'ignominie.  
 Ma mère——ô ciel ! Ninus ! ah ! quel aveu cruel !  
 Mais si le traître Assur était seul criminel,  
 S'il se pouvait——

*Or.* [*prenant le lettre et la lui donnant.*] Voici  
 ces sacrés caractères,  
 Ces garants trop certains de ces cruels mystères ;  
 Le monument du crime est ici sous vos yeux ;  
 Douterez-vous encor ?

*Ar.* Que ne le puis-je, ô dieux !

Donnez, je n'aurai plus de doute qui me flatte ;

Donnez. [il lit.

*Ninus mourant, au fidèle Phradate.*

*Je meurs empoisonné, prenez soin de mon fils :*

*Arrachez Ninias à des bras ennemis ;*

*Ma criminelle épouse——*

*Or.* En faut-il davantage ?

C'est de vous que je tiens cet affreux témoignage.

Ninus n'acheva point : l'approche de la mort

Glaça sa faible main qui traçait votre sort :

Phradate en cet écrit vous apprend le reste ;

Lisez, il vous confirme un secret si funeste.

Il suffit, Ninus parle, il arme votre bras,

De sa tombe à son trône il va guider vos pas ;

Il veut du sang.

*Ar.* [après avoir lu.] O jour trop fécond en  
miracles !

Enfer, qui m'as parlé, tes funestes oracles

Sont plus obscurs encor à mon esprit troublé,

Que le sein de la tombe où je suis appelé.

Au sacrificeur on cache la victime ;

Je tremble sur le choix.

*Or.* Tremblez, mais sur le crime.



Allez, dans les horreurs dont vous êtes troublé,  
 Le ciel vous conduira, comme il vous a parlé.  
 Ne vous regardez plus comme un homme ordinaire ;  
 Des éternels décrets sacré dépositaire,  
 Marqué du sceau des dieux, séparé des humains,  
 Avancez dans la nuit qui couvre vos destins.  
 Mortel, faible instrument des dieux de vos ancêtres,  
 Vous n'avez pas le droit d'interroger vos maîtres.

## SCENE. III.

*Arzace, Mitrane.*

*Mit. [arrivant.]* Babylone, seigneur, en ce commun effroi,

Ne peut se rassurer qu'en revoyant son roi.  
 Souffrez que le premier je vienne reconnaître,  
 Et l'époux de la reine, et mon auguste maître.  
 Sémiramis vous cherche, elle vient sur mes pas :  
 Je bénis ce moment qui la met dans vos bras.  
 Vous ne répondez point. Un désespoir farouche  
 Fixe vos yeux troublés, et vous ferme la bouche ;  
 Vous pâlissez d'effroi, tout votre corps frémit.  
 Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? qu'est-ce qu'on vous a dit ?

*Ar.* Fuyons vers Azéma.

*Mit.* Quel étonnant langage !

Seigneur, est-ce bien vous ? faites-vous cet outrage  
Aux bontés de la reine, à ses feux, à son choix,  
A ce cœur qui pour vous dédaigna tant de rois ?  
Son espérance en vous est-elle confondue.

*Ar.* Dieux ! c'est Sémiramis, qui se montre à ma  
vue !

SCENE IV.

*Sémiramis, Arzace, Otane.*

*Sem.* Je vois avec transports ce signe révééré,  
Qu'a mis sur votre front un pontife inspiré,  
Ce sacré diadème, assuré témoignage  
Que l'enfer et le ciel confirment mon suffrage.  
Tout le parti d'Assur frappé d'un saint respect,  
Tombe à la voix des dieux, et tremble à mon aspect.  
Ninus veut une offrande, il en est plus propice :  
Pour hâter mon bonheur, hâtez ce sacrifice.  
Tous les cœurs sont à nous, tous le peuple applaudit :  
Vous réglez, je vous aime ; Assur en vain frémit.

*Ar.* [*bors de lui.*] Assur ! allons—il faut dans  
le sang du perfide—

Dans cet infâme sang lavons son parricide ;  
Allons venger Ninus—

*Sem.* Qu'entends-je ? juste ciel !  
Ninus !

*Ar.* [*d'un air égaré.*] Vous m'avez dit que son  
bras criminel

[*revenant à lui.*] Avait—que l'insolent s'arme contre  
sa reine,

Et n'est-ce pas assez pour mériter ma haine ?

*Sem.* Commencez la vengeance en recevant ma  
foi.

*Ar.* Mon père !

*Sem.* Ah ! quels regards vos yeux lancent sur moi !  
Soyez tel qu'à mes pieds je vous ai vu paraître,  
Lorsque vous redoutiez d'avoir Assur pour maître.  
Ne craignez point Ninus, et son ombre en courroux.  
Arzace, mon appui, mon secours, mon époux,  
Cher prince—

*Ar.* [*se détournant.*] C'en est trop : le crime  
m'environne—

Arrêtez.

*Sem.* A quel trouble, hélas ! il s'abandonne,

*Ar.* Fuyez-moi pour jamais.

*Sem.* Non, tu ne le veux pas,  
Mon cœur suivra ton cœur, mes pas suivront tes  
pas.

Quel est donc ce billet, que tes yeux pleins d'alarmes  
Lisent avec horreur et trempent de leurs larmes ?  
Contient-il les raisons de tes refus affreux ?

*Ar.* Oui.

*Sem.* Donne.

*Ar.* Ah ! je ne puis—osez-vous ?—

*Sem.* Je le veux.

*Ar.* Mon père—

Cessez—

*Sem.* [*prenant le billet.*] Eclaircissez ce doute  
qui m'accable ;

Ne me résistez plus, ou je vous crois coupable.

[*Sémiramis lit.*

*Ar.* Vous allez trop savoir, c'en est fait.

*Sem.* [*à Otane.*] Qu'ai-je lu ?

Soutiens-moi, je me meurs—

*Ar.* Hélas ! tout est connu—

*Sem.* [*revenant à elle, après un long silence.*] Eh  
bien ! ne tarde plus, remplis ta destinée ;

Punis cette coupable et cette infortunée ;

H h

Etouffe dans mon sang mes détestables feux.

La nature trompée est horrible à tous deux ;

Venge tous mes forfaits, venge la mort d'un père,  
Reconnais-moi, mon fils, frappe, et punis ta mère.

*Ar.* Que ce glaive plutôt épuise ici mon flanc  
De ce sang malheureux formé de votre sang ?  
Qu'il perce de vos mains ce cœur qui vous révère,  
Et qui porte d'un fils le sacré caractère !

*Sem.* [*se jettant à genoux.*] Ah ! je suis sans  
pitié, sois barbare à ton tour ;  
Sois le fils de Ninus, en m'arrachant le jour ;  
Frappe. Mais quoi ! tes pleurs se mêlent à mes  
larmes !

O Ninias ! ô jour plein d'horreur et de charmes !—  
Avant de me donner la mort que tu me dois,  
De la nature encor laisse parler la voix ;  
Souffre au moins que les pleurs de ta coupable mère  
Arrose une main si fatale et si chère.

*Ar.* Ah ! je suis votre fils, et ce n'est pas à vous,  
Quoi que vous ayez fait, d'embrasser mes genoux.  
Ninias vous implore, il vous aime ; il vous jure  
Les plus profonds respects, et l'amour la plus pure,  
C'est un nouveau sujet, plus cher et plus soumis,  
Le ciel est appaisé, puisqu'il vous rend un fils.



*Sem.* Non, mon crime est trop grand.

*Ar.* Le repentir l'efface.

*Sem.* Ninus t'a commandé de régner en ma place ;

Crains ses mânes vengeurs.

*Ar.* Ils seront attendris

Des remords d'une mère, et des larmes d'un fils.

Otane, au nom des dieux, ayez soin de ma mère,

Et cachez comme moi cet horrible mystère.

## ACTE V. SCENE I.

*Sémiramis, Otane.*

*Ot.* Des oracles d'Ammon les ordres absolus,  
Les infernales voix, les mânes de Ninus,  
Vous disaient que le jour d'un nouvel hyménée  
Finirait les horreurs de votre destinée :  
Mais ils ne disaient pas qu'il dût être accompli.  
L'hymen s'est préparé, votre sort est rempli ;  
Ninias vous révère. Un secret sacrifice  
Va contenter des dieux la facile justice :  
Ce jour si redouté fera votre bonheur.

*Sem.* Ah ! le bonheur, Otane, est-il fait pour  
mon cœur ?

Mon fils s'est attendri ; je me flatte, j'espère,  
Qu'en ces premiers moments la douleur d'une mère  
Parle plus hautement à ses sens oppressés,  
Que le sang de Ninus, et mes crimes passés.  
Mais peut-être bientôt, moins tendre et plus sévère,  
Il ne se souviendra que du meurtre d'un père.

*Ot.* Que craignez-vous d'un fils ? quel noir pressentiment ?

*Sem.* La crainte suit le crime, et c'est son châ-  
timent.

Le détestable Assur sait-il ce qui se passe ?

N'a-t-on rien attenté ? Sait-on quel est Arzace ?

*Ot.* Non ; ce secret terrible est de tous ignoré :  
De l'ombre de Ninus l'oracle est adoré ;  
Les esprits consternés ne peuvent le comprendre,  
Comment servir sons fils ? pourquoi venger sa  
cendre ?

Dans ses sombres fureurs Assur enveloppé,  
Rassemble les débris d'un parti dissipé ;  
Je ne sais quels projets il peut former encore.

*Sem.* Ah ! c'est trop ménager un traître que j'ab-  
horre ;

Qu'Assur chargé de fers en vos mains soit remis ;

Otane, allez livrer le coupable à mon fils.

Mon fils appaisera l'éternelle justice,

En répandant du moins le sang de mon complice.

## SCENE II.

*Sémiramis, Azéma.*

*Az.* Madame, pardonnez si sans être appelée,  
De mortelles frayeurs trop justement troublée,  
Je viens avec transport embrasser vos genoux.

*Sem.* Ah! princesse, parlez, que me demandez-vous?

*Az.* J'ignore quels forfaits il faut qu'Arzace expie.

*Sem.* Quels forfaits, justes dieux!

*Az.* Cet Assur, cet impie,  
Va violer la tombe où nul n'est introduit.

*Sem.* Qui, lui?

*Az.* Dans les horreurs de la profonde nuit;  
D'une main sacrilège aux forfaits enhardie,  
Du généreux Arzace il va trancher la vie.  
Il ne commet qu'à lui ce meurtre détesté;  
Il marche au sacrilège avec impunité:  
Sûr que dans ce lieu saint nul n'osera paraître,  
Que l'accès en est même interdit au Grand-Prêtre,

Il y vole : et le bruit par ses soins se répand,  
Qu'Arzace est la victime, et que la mort l'attend ;  
Que Ninus dans son sang doit laver son injure.  
On parle au peuple, aux grands, on s'assemble, on  
murmure.

*Sem.* Ma fille, nos destins à la fois sont remplis :  
Défendez votre époux, je vais sauver mon fils.

*Az.* Ciel !

*Sem.* Les moments sont chers. Laissez-moi dans  
ces lieux :

Ordonnez en mon nom que les prêtres des dieux,  
Que les chefs de l'état viennent ici se rendre.

*[Azéma passe dans le vestibule du temple ; Sémira-  
mis de l'autre côté, s'avance vers le mausolée.]*

Ombre de mon époux ! je vais venger ta cendre.

Voici l'instant fatal, où ta voix m'a promis

Que l'accès de ta tombe allait m'être permis :

J'obéirai ; mes mains qui guidaient des armées,

Pour secourir mon fils à ta voix sont armées.

Venez, gardes du trône, accourez à ma voix,

D'Arzace désormais reconnaissez les loix :

Arzace est votre roi, vous n'avez plus de reine ;

Je dépose en ses mains la grandeur souveraine.



Soyez ses défenseurs, ainsi que ses sujets.

Allez. [les gardes se rangent au fond de la scène.

Dieux tout-puissans, secondez mes projets.

[elle entre dans le tombeau.

### SCENE III.

*Azéma revenant de la porte du temple sur le devant de la scène.*

Az. Que méditait la reine, et quel dessein l'anime?  
A-t-elle encor le tems de prévenir le crime?  
O prodige! ô destin, que je ne conçois pas!  
Moment cher et terrible, Arzace, Ninias!  
Arbitres des humains, puissances, que j'adore,  
Me l'avez-vous rendu pour le ravir encore?

### SCENE IV.

*Azéma, Arzace, ou Ninias.*

Az. Ah! cher prince, arrêtez. Ninias, est-ce vous?

Vous le fils de Ninus, mon maître et mon époux?

*Nin.* Encouragez ce bras prêt à venger un père.

*Az.* Gardez-vous de remplir cet affreux ministère.

*Nin.* Je dois un sacrifice, il le faut, j'obéis.

*Az.* Non. Ninus ne veut pas qu'on immole son fils.

*Nin.* Comment ?

*Az.* Vous n'irez point dans ce lieu redoutable ;  
Un traître y tend pour vous un piège inévitable.

*Nin.* Qui peut me retenir, et qui peut m'effrayer ?

*Az.* C'est vous que dans la tombe on va sacrifier ;  
Assur, l'indigne Assur, a d'un pas sacrilège,  
Violé du tombeau le divin privilège :  
Il vous attend.

*Nin.* Grands dieux ! tout est donc éclairci.  
Mon cœur est rassuré, la victime est ici.

Je n'aurai qu'à frapper la victime funeste,  
Qu'amène à mon courroux la justice céleste.

Je vois trop que ma main dans ce fatal moment,  
D'un pouvoir invincible est l'aveugle instrument.  
Les dieux seuls ont tout fait, et mon ame étonnée  
S'abandonne à la voix qui fait ma destinée.

Et couvert à vos yeux du sang du criminel,

Ils vont de ce tombeau me conduire à l'autel.

J'obé , c'est assez ; le ciel fera le reste

*SCENE V.*

*Azéma seule.*

*Az.* Dieux ! veillez sur ses pas, dans ce tombeau  
funeste.

Que voulez-vous ? quel sang doit aujourd'hui cou-  
ler ?

Impénétrables dieux, vous me faites trembler.

Je crains Assur, je crains cette main sanguinaire ;  
Il peut percer le fils sur la cendre du père.

O son père ! ô Ninus ! quoi ! tu n'as pas permis  
Qu'une épouse éplorée accompagnât ton fils !

Ninus, combats pour lui dans ce lieu de ténèbres.

N'entends-je pas sa voix parmi des cris funèbres ?

Dût ce sacré tombeau, profané par mes pas,

Ouvrir pour me punir les gouffres du trépas,

J'y descendrai : j'y vole—Ah ! quels coups de  
tonnerre

Ont enflammé le ciel, et font trembler la terre !

Je crains, j'espère—il vient.

SCENE VI.

*Ninias une épée sanglante à la main, Azéma.*

*Nin.* Ciel ! où suis-je ?

*Az.* Ah ! seigneur,

Vous êtes teint de sang, pâle, glacé d'horreur.

*Nin.* [d'un air égaré.] Il marchait devant moi :  
j'ai reconnu la place,

Que son ombre en courroux marquait à mon audace.

Auprès d'une colonne, et loin de la clarté,

Qui suffisait à peine à ce lieu redouté,

J'ai vu briller le fer dans la main du perfide ;

J'ai cru le voir trembler, tout coupable est timide :

J'ai deux fois dans son flanc plongé ce fer vengeur ;

Et d'un bras tout sanglant, qu'animait sa fureur,

Déjà je le traînais, roulant sur la poussière,

Vers les lieux d'où partait cette faible lumière :

Un sentiment confus, qui même m'épouvante,

M'ont fait abandonner la victime sanglante.

Azéma, quel est donc ce trouble, cet effroi.

Cette invincible horreur qui s'empare de moi ?

Mon cœur est pur, ô dieux ! mes mains sont innocentes :

D'un sang proscrit par vous, vous les voyez fumantes ;

Quoi ! j'ai servi le ciel, et je sens des remords !

*Az.* Vous avez satisfait la nature et les morts.

Quittons ce lieu terrible, allons vers votre mère :

Calmez à ses genoux ce trouble involontaire ;

Et puisqu' Assur n'est plus—

#### SCÈNE VII.

*Ninias, Azéma, Assur.*

*Assur paraît dans l'enfoncement avec Otane et les gardes de la reine.*

*Az.* Ciel ! Assur à mes yeux !

*Nin.* Assur ?

*Az.* Accourez tous, ministres de nos dieux,  
Ministres de nos rois, défendez votre maître.



SCENE VIII.

*Le Grand-Prêtre Oroès, les Mages et le Peuple,  
Ninias, Azéma, Assur désarmé, Mitrane, Otane.*

*Ot.* Il n'en est pas besoin ; j'ai fait saisir le traître,  
Lorsque dans ce lieu saint il allait pénétrer.  
La reine l'ordonna, je viens vous le livrer.

*Nin.* Qu'ai-je fait ? et quelle est la victime im-  
molée ?

*Or.* Le ciel est satisfait ; la vengeance est comblée.  
[*en montrant Assur.*

Peuples, de votre roi voilà l'empoisonneur.

[*en montrant Ninias.*

Peuples, de votre roi voilà le successeur.

Je viens vous l'annoncer, je viens le reconnaître ;  
Revoyez Ninias, et servez votre maître.

*Ass.* Toi, Ninias ?

*Or.* Lui-même ; un dieu qui l'a conduit  
Le sauva de ta rage, et ce dieu te poursuit.

*Ass.* Toi, de Sémiramis tu reçus la naissance !

*Nin.* Oui ; mais pour te punir j'ai reçu sa puis-  
sance.

Allez, délivrez-moi de ce monstre inhumain.

Il ne méritait pas de tomber sous ma main.

Qu'il meure dans l'opprobre, et non de mon épée ;

Et qu'on rende au trépas ma victime échappée.

[*Sémiramis paraît au pied du tombeau mourante ;  
un Mage qui est à cette porte la relève.*]

*Ass.* Va, mon plus grand supplice est de te voir  
mon roi ;

[*appercevant Sémiramis.*]

Mais je te laisse encor plus malheureux que moi.

Regarde ce tombeau ; contemple ton ouvrage.

*Nin.* Quelle victime, ô ciel ! a donc frappé ma  
rage !

*Az.* Ah ! fuyez, cher époux !

*Mit.* Qu'avez-vous fait ?

*Or.* [*se mettant entre le tombeau et Ninias.*]  
Sortez.

Venez purifier vos bras ensanglantés ;

Remettez dans mes mains ce glaive trop funeste,

Cet aveugle instrument de la fureur céleste.

*Nin.* [*courant vers Sémiramis.*] Ah ! cruels,  
laissez-moi le plonger dans mon cœur.

*Or.* [*tandis qu'on le désarme.*] Gardez de le  
laisser à sa propre fureur.

*Sem.* [qu'on fait avancer, et qu'on place sur un fauteuil.] Viens me venger, mons fils : un monstre sanguinaire,

Un traître, un sacrilège, assassine ta mère.

*Nin.* O jour de la terreur ! ô crimes inouis !  
Ce sacrilège affreux, ce monstre est votre fils,  
Au sein qui m'a nourri cette main s'est plongée :  
Je vous suis dans la tombe, et vous serez vengée.

*Sem.* Hélas ! j'y descendis pour défendre tes jours.

Ta malheureuse mère allait à ton secours——  
J'ai reçu de tes mains la mort qui m'était due.

*Nin.* Ah ! c'est le dernier trait à mon ame éperdue.

J'atteste ici les dieux qui conduisaient mon bras,  
Ces dieux qui m'égarèrent——

*Sem.* Mon fils, n'acheve pas :  
Je te pardonne tout, si pour grace dernière  
Une si chère main ferme au moins ma paupière.

[il se jette à genoux.

Viens, je te le demande au nom du même sang  
Qui t'a donné la vie, et qui sort de mon flanc.  
Ton cœur n'a pas sur moi conduit ta main cruelle.  
Quand Ninus expira j'étais plus criminelle.

J'en suis assez punie. Il est donc des forfaits  
Que le courroux des dieux ne pardonne jamais !  
Ninias, Azéma, que votre hymen efface  
L'opprobre dont mon crime a souillé votre race ;  
D'une mère expirante approchez-vous tous deux ;  
Donnez-moi votre main ; vivez, réglez heureux,  
Cet espoir me console—Il mêle quelque joie  
Aux horreurs de la mort où mon ame est en proie.  
Je la sens—elle vient—songe à Sémiramis,  
Ne hais point sa mémoire : ô mon fils, mon cher  
—fils !—

C'en est fait—

*Or.* La lumière à ses yeux est ravie.

Secourez Ninias, prenez soin de sa vie.

Par ce terrible exemple, apprenez tous, du moins,  
Que les crimes secrets ont les dieux pour témoins.  
Plus le coupable est grand, plus grand est le sup-  
plice.

Rois, tremblez sur le trône, et craignez leur justice.

FIN.

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AFTER contemplating these dramas, some additional reflections on the arts naturally offer themselves with regard to their agreement or interference with each other; of which the theatre, by uniting their various efforts in a single labour, furnishes the most frequent instances. The scenic art daily, by its excellence, assists bad dramatic composition, and therefore discourages good. Music rewards the former with still more honour, (though perhaps not profit), as it does many a song unworthy of a second reading. Architecture often suffers by indifference to beauty, or a false notion of convenience; nor is it then always permitted to strike, as at Naples, with masses, picturesque by their very deviation from its principles. This is a favourable resemblance of good examples of incorrect writing; though one would not build badly to produce exactly the effects there admired; and however the landscape painter would ill afford to lose any happy subjects, yet it would be judicious rather to build in the spirit of what has lately been recom-



mended in gardening, which is, to plant in the foreground, not the forest plants usually introduced in pictures, but those more elegant shrubs whose form resembles them; that thus effect and propriety may equally be preserved.

There is no art which thus suffers with such remediless consequences as architecture. A bad picture or statue may be concealed; ground may be altered; a play or a poem may be neglected; but suppose there is in a city some conspicuous situation for a public building, and the job of building it is given to a person, merely because he is Mr. Such-a-one, the architect, though destitute of any degree of taste: and here not only a huge pile is raised, which daily disgusts the passing natives of the country who have any feeling, and gives reason for ignorant foreigners to triumph over their government, and under-rate their progress in refinement: but while some Pantheon is burning down, a spot is blocking up for centuries, where a lasting monument of public taste might be erected, to secure them the very advantages opposite to these disadvantages, and fully equal to them. It is, indeed, a matter both of regret and wonder, that those most capable of im-

bibing the spirit of Sophocles and Demosthenes, should think so lightly of arts calculated to awaken fire similar to what they show, and which by enlightening the mind and exercising the powers of reason with the contemplation of universal fitness, may be considered as a part of philosophy. Rather than that the table of our families should not be adorned by a superfluous dish, we are willing to make known our extreme contempt for the interests of what is called *taste*, to the confusion of those who, unengaged by sordid views, consider the cheering influence of the fine arts their indispensable right, as much as the light of the sun, and the free and just exercise of their talents as little of an exorbitant claim as exemption from unmerited bondage. How, too, this liberty can be inconsistent with a gentleman's character, I have often wondered. That character is chiefly valuable because its leisure is favourable to the polish of manners, and cultivation of the arts of living.—It is therefore the peculiar possession of certain powers or talents, and not the reputation of being deficient in any, by which it is distinguished. It is true, that as voluptuousness or indecorum can never be necessary

for improving the nature, and increasing the true liberty of man, they ought to be discouraged, if it is only not to reflect disgrace upon any system; and there are some less important talents which may remain dormant. No modification of existing customs has *yet* silenced objection against the acting of plays, among the gentry, even by the more hardy sex. But musical talents, on the other hand, may creditably be displayed by the softer, in a private room, where the company are well acquainted with each other.

But to return from this digression, the ingenious Mr. Gilpin (to whom I am indebted for a part of my education), is of opinion, that in the case of an antique mansion, where the grounds still remain in the old style, there will be much to say on both sides, on the question, whether it is proper to weaken character, in order to produce picturesque beauty. I must confess, I would not for a moment withhold from nature the least space where she has room “to play at will her fancies;” but perhaps a degree of the old style might not displease much, if it adhered to extreme simplicity; for the addition of a single line or angle, in gardening, increases formality tenfold; while sometimes a form strongly

marked by simplicity, seems to master and overpower the effect of regularity. But I would confine all such forms as terraces, avenues, &c. so much to the neighbourhood of the house or palace, that the latter especially should touch, and be parallel with, the buildings. I have always admired them where they have been still more mixed with buildings, as on the ramparts of foreign towns. But I think no lover of nature, or person who thinks utility is allied in idea with beauty, will wish to see a space sufficient to fill the eye with corn, grass, or wood, bisected by trees in such a form, that if one were cut down for some purpose of husbandry, it would obviously defeat the end for which they were planted. There is no representation of an avenue in the *Liber Veritatis*, to prove it necessary to picturesque beauty; and if it is the verdant arch overhead that pleases us in it, and not the equal distance and size of the trees, nature affords us that advantage, either in a wood, or at least such a road cut through it, as Lord Orford recommends, and is as natural as the same road beyond it. The advantage of resemblance between an avenue and a Gothic aisle seems to me the less from an opinion that nature ennobles art, than art nature. A field

of half an acre, through which a rivulet gurgles, in passing a cottage, backed by a hanging wood, forms a worthy subject for a poem; but an avenue may often look green, without looking beautiful, in song. As a poet therefore, at least, Mason might naturally be disinclined to avenues; and I confess I think he judged equally well in prescribing close bounds to them, and in wishing the drama sometimes to vary, and to augment its amusement with the poetry and music of the chorus.

In regard to the theatre, I could wish my countrymen to conceive the possibility of its exhibiting a total effect (excepting only that of Shakspeare's poetry, *nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes*), far superior to what it has ever done before; and I hope that their enthusiasm will win the honour of it for our country. We may imagine a theatre built by an Inigo Jones, or a James Wyatt;\* the

\* Since I expressed the wish in page 134 of this volume, that architecture should be founded perfectly and demonstrably on reason, I have perused the following observations favourable to it, in the interesting publication of Mr. Jackson of Exeter, called the Four Ages.—“Architecture will not be slavishly held in Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian bonds,



pathos of a Shakspeare expressed by the countenance, voice, and gesture of a Garrick, and the choral odes of a Gray, deriving their utmost force from the tones of a Billington, and the inventive skill of a Purcell.—The energy of the English and correctness of the French stage may be united.—In the idle parts of tragedy we may imagine some dance, Pyrrhic, Salian, or others, either recorded in history, or adapted to it, which should strike by the ingenuity of its characteristic plan, as well as the grace and agility of the performers; with which decent dress will be perfectly compatible, as a strict morality might preside over the whole entertainment.

It is far from being any thing engaging, like the but formed on such aliquot parts as correct judgment, joined with elegant taste, shall find most proper.” P. 93. Also,

“To the circle, or portions of it, may be referred the general forms in the Roman and Saxon architecture. From acute arches, or acute angles, may be derived the general forms of Gothic architecture.” P. 69.

I have intimated that no essential difference would be perceived in this case, and that the work should be undertaken by architects who are fearful, and therefore alone able, to invent.

ideal figures of Raphael and the ancients, or the realizing hues of Titian, that is objectionable in the exhibition of almost perfect nakedness on the opera stage. The effect experienced must be that of cold indecency ; and the manager will find it in his power to strike much more, according to his present intention, by judiciously adding drapery, in many cases. In like manner, it is certain that gross obscenity is not welcome, because it does not, like seductive discourse, excite the passions ; but that persons may risk being familiarized to vice by the former, who are the least likely to be gained upon by the latter.

In the first magistrate's box, and others, perhaps (especially if, as at the opera, they are purchased for a length of time), it might be worthwhile for Sculpture to introduce her bas-reliefs, and even Painting her history-pieces, with the like advantage of a side-light, as she does her landscapes on the stage ; the former to amuse between, and the latter to impress during, the acts. But the lighting of the house might be contrived for sculpture elsewhere, as Cariatides supporting the boxes, or statues dispersed about in various ways. Even now this

wealthy, favoured country almost drains Europe of its musical genius, and dancing has become one amusement at the playhouse ; as if preparatory to these improvements. The arts of engraving and printing are not unconnected with the theatre, whether we consider them adorning the drama there, or in a library. And here I cannot at all admire a comparison I have lately read of these ornaments of poems with the painting of statues ; though Voltaire, nearer the infancy of *engraving*, has without consideration condemned the assistance poetry derives from it. I mean however, particularly, good poems ; for there is nothing so heterogeneous as a bad work, edited and bound in the most sumptuous manner. But works useful either from happy fancy, or some historical and appropriate quality may, as I have intimated in note to ver. 623 of the *Art of English Poetry*, deserve this honour ; which would then resemble a golden statue raised to some useful member of society. By such means the pleasing idea is naturally suggested of

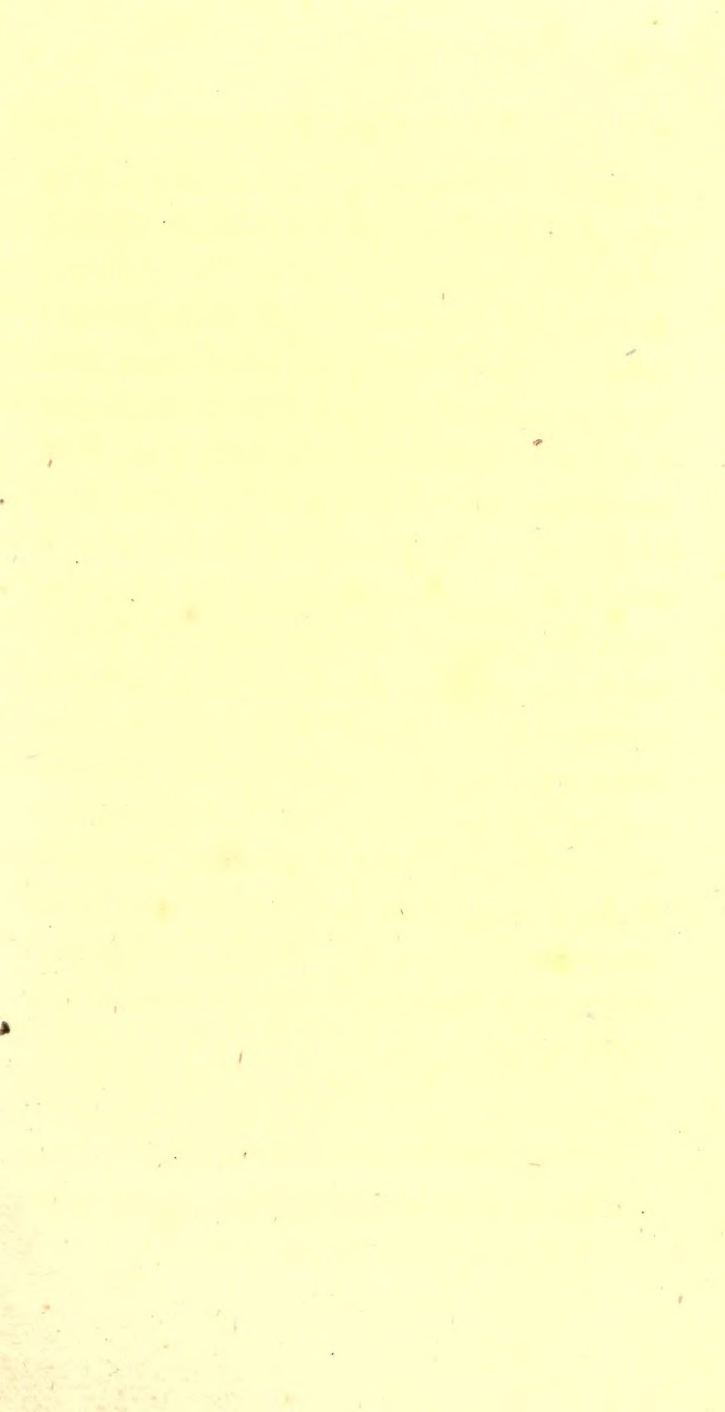
“ Art reflecting images to art.”

Thus the theatre, displaying the exertions of every talent, and filled by lookers-on, all of whom either

encourage, or relish and admire them, may seem an epitome of the world, not I fear as it is, but certainly as it ought to be.

Concerning the great principle which has regulated my criticisms, that perfect liberty should be allowed to genius, and yet perfect justice done to art, I shall say a word, before I conclude them: I will remark, that this is evidently the opinion of the greatest critics. Aristotle never had his full share of glory *in that character*, till, after being referred to by the French, as an authority favourable to literary law, he was claimed lately, by the English, as a partizan of literary liberty. Horace thus, we have seen, united candour and justice. He by no means possessed the modern Platonic love of criticism, which contents itself with the animating spirit, without the symmetrical form, and beautiful contour of poetry; and still less did he fall in love with genius, as some do now, merely because it stammered and was mis-shapen.

THE END.





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